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The PROBLEM OF EZEKIEL

AN INDUCTIVE STUDY

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By

WILLIAM A. IRWIN

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אנשי כנסת הגדולה כתבו יחזקאל

To

PROFESSOR T. H. ROBINSON

FOR HIS GENEROUS FRIENDSHIP THROUGH MANY YEARS

and to

HIS COLLEAGUES, THE OLD TESTAMENT SCHOLARSHIP OF GREAT BRITAIN

THIS MODEST STUDY IS DEDICATED

IN HUMBLE TRIBUTE TO

THE FORTITUDE AND COURAGE AND FAITH

WITH WHICH THEY AND THEIR COMPATRIOTS

THROUGH THESE TRYING YEARS

ARE INSCRIBING A NEW DIGNITY OF

THE HUMAN SPIRIT

PREFACE

The results presented herewith have matured through more than ten years of special interest in the problem of Ezekiel. At first the study concerned itself with what in the outcome proved to be minor critical matters, such as the poetic structure of chapter 7 or the interpretation of chapter 19. But presently, chancing upon that feature with which the present investigation begins, attention was directed toward employing it to unlock all the mysteries of the structure of the book. However, disappointment came soon, for the clue quickly diminished and presently disappeared. Fortunately, by that time it had provided, however, a nucleus of results which through constant criticism and re-examination commended themselves as reliable. With these the investigation pushed out once more into unfamiliar critical areas and little by little succeeded in building up further evidences of the differentiation of genuine from spurious in the Book of Ezekiel. Progress has been slow. The whole problem has been worked through again and again. But, with the recriticism of results entailed and the fresh approach thus provided, there has fortunately been at each new assault on the problem some little gain. To the very end minor points have been yielding new insights and solutions. Those who choose to do so may readily discover that the position now set forth diverges at several points from that sketched in my chapter in the second edition of J. M. Powis Smith's The Prophets and Their Times published in 1941.

On this background it would, obviously, be an absurdity to claim finality. And the reader will not advance far into my discussion without meeting frank admissions, reiterated indeed to the point of tedium, of the uncertainty of many features of my results. There is still much work to be done. The activity of the commentators, as I have called those workers commonly dismissed as "editors," is shrouded in mystery. It would seem that at the best we can never attain satisfactory knowledge of them; like hosts of other thinkers in the long story of Judaism, they have been concerned not to parade themselves or their circumstances before the eyes of posterity but only to speak the truth as they apprehended it. I realize that I have done little more than indicate within broad limits the times in which they lived and outline the features of their thought. It may be that other workers will uncover evidence which I have overlooked. I sincerely hope so. But even in regard to the genuine oracles of Ezekiel I am ready to admit that my results lie open to reconsideration. Still, whatever their incompleteness, the time has come to set them before my colleagues in Old Testament scholarship and to invoke their assistance toward such finality as is now possible after the interval of many centuries since the last discussion by men who possessed some approximation to direct knowledge of the history of the book: the rabbis of Jamnia and the author of the Baraitha in Baba Bathra. For my part, I shall be happy if my contribution may serve in some way to release the criticism of Ezekiel from the impasse in which it now stands and so to contribute to the unlocking of its resources for the life of today.

It is possible that some readers—in the mood of prepublication optimism every author, I presume, imagines that he will have some readers!—will dismiss the conclusions to which the evidence has compelled me as too drastic. Some may indeed consider that I have not so much employed as forced the evidence. But in reality my results are highly "orthodox." It has been a personal satisfaction to find that, with as objective and unbiased a use of the evidence as I could command, I found in the end the figure of Ezekiel emerging essentially as he has been known for twenty-five hundred years. In only one important regard does my account of him depart from that of age-long tradition: he went to Babylonia with the second deportation, not the first. And, indeed, there is little novel in even this; the view is familiar, and has been somewhat generally accepted for ten years past, that the major bulk of Ezekiel's work was done in Jerusalem. True, he was, according to my results, not a psychic abnormality but moved among his contemporaries as a man of healthy mind.

This may perhaps be considered an "important" departure from tradition, but it is such clear gain for our appraisal of Ezekiel that no one, it is hoped, will complain that I have led him away from the fleshpots of Egypt to die of famine in the wilderness. However, I am not thus requesting others to spread their covering wings around, nor seeking to shelter from hot arrows of indignation behind the mistakes or merits of previous study of the Book of Ezekiel. I am fully conscious that in chapter after chapter I fly obstinately right in the face of such poor consensus as at present exists. For this I can but bare my head to the bludgeonings of chance or whatever else may determine the reaction of objectors. I have chosen my course deliberately and must accept its consequences.

However, my use of evidence may prove a contentious issue. For in literary research what is evidence and what its validity? Obviously, we lack that objectivity which is the pride and assurance of workers in the natural sciences. Compared with their results, our findings seem hazy and ill attested. The line between fact and subjective interpretation of that fact is often obscure, and at the best we seem to deal only with probability rather than proven conclusions. Yet out predicament has its compensations, for it keeps ever before the conscientious worker the fact that *any* result is uncertain! The natural scientist, through the character of his evidence and through his ability to check it, is in danger of supposing that his theories are demonstrated truth, immutable as the universe, when equally with ourselves he is but working with greater and less probability. There is in the total of knowledge not a single *proven* fact. At every point and in every consideration there enters the complicating element of the human faculties. The tricks that our senses can and do play on us in even most serious moments is a painful recollection for probably every throughful person. And when, further, the delicate and highly intricate mechanism of thought and judgment is called into play to build up our observations into supposed facts and truths, it is apparent how at every step we move further from certainty. More especially when one's subject matter is human conduct, as in the case of the historian and student of literature, the problem is so confused and complicated by human psychology at both ends of the investigation that all effort might well be surrendered in despair of solid result. But it is encouraging to reflect that such areas of scholarship are but a projection of common everyday intercourse of mind on mind. Men were using means of communication, were depending upon them, and were finding that with reasonable safeguards they were satisfactory guides long ages before critical faculties awakened to the point of disparaging their reliability. The historian and the literary critic have but sublimated the methods of that prescholarly period, and their results are correspondingly acceptable. They recognize so freely as to feel the raising of the issue an impertinence that they deal with only relative probabilities. But they can claim, too, that such probabilities have worked through the entire course of human life and that practical affairs of our own, as of every day, go on nothing but this same insecure basis. In the end, then, reasonably high probability is (and rightly) accepted as established fact, though every scholar knows that it is nothing of the sort. But the assumption works.

So in strict reality I have not proved anything in my study of Ezekiel. Nor have I attempted to do so! The issue is confused with the psychology of the prophet, which some believe to have been highly unusual; and practically every student of the book now admits that other minds, of greater or less number, have added their confusion to the problem. What any one of this indeterminate number may have done is beset with all the uncertainties of human motivation and conduct. They may well have taken just the opposite course to that which I have ascribed to them. However, the critical reader of my study will be more concerned with my psychology than with Ezekiel's: Has my observation been reliable? What tricks has my judgment played on me? I have, so I claim, identified genuine and spurious elements in a passage where the evidence carries such high probability as to be accepted, according to our standards in literary criticism, as proof. But, proceeding further, I have found scattered through the book a considerable number of passages homogeneous with the former of these. The existence of these is an objective fact, and commonly their features also relate them so clearly to the accepted body of genuine material as to raise no question. Yet, at times, some features of the genuine, and not infrequently the line of distinction between genuine and spurious, are less clear than is desired. At such points the charge that I have forced the issue will perhaps be raised by some readers: that I have merely prejudged the question in accord with subjective predilections. I am not, however, apprehensive that this view will be long maintained by any serious student of my results. My decisions may be wrong in many cases; I have probably overlooked evidence, which, then, I hope others will present. But I claim (indeed, it is not at all novel but merely a generally recognized principle of criticism) that a basic condition in any literary analysis, far surpassing in dependability any rules of thumb that may be evolved, however astute, is a thorough familiarity with the authors under study. When it is established by reasonably clear evidence that a given author thinks and writes in such-and-such fashion, then it is a sound presumption in a case where other evidence fails that he has again done so. And it is valid criticism to accept the conclusion thus indicated, though recognizing that at such points the measure of uncertainty is higher than elsewhere. Such procedure may seem to lie open to the charge of subjectivity, that it is deciding the issue by presuppositions. But in reality it differs widely, since such alleged presuppositions are not dogmatic but have been built up by careful induction. However, in case my critics are still unsatisfied, I can but defer to their judgment, consenting that he who is without such sin may cast the first stone!

I shall not insult the intelligence of my readers with a formal explanation of the order in which I have arranged the chapters of the Book of Ezekiel for this inductive study. When one is in search of evidence, he must go where that evidence is to be found. And not uncommonly, in literary criticism as in the wider issues of life, evidence organizes itself into a sequence, such that it cannot be properly employed in isolation but only in its place in the sequence. The order which I have followed is a prime result of my inductive studies. It is not arbitrarily chosen but results from a long process of trial and error. The one spot at which the study of the problem of Ezekiel may properly begin is, I am convinced, just where I have begun it. This is determined, not by any canons of criticism or by anyone's dictum, but purely by the nature of the Book of Ezekiel. Only along this line, if my own blundering progress toward the solution of the riddle is indicative, will the book yield its secrets. Perhaps it will be objected that here, again, I am forcing the issue. It may be claimed that with a different order of study different results would probably have emerged. The only answer one can give is a complete agreement! Critics have hitherto, in the main, followed the traditional order and have, beyond a doubt, reached different results—many of them; every critic different from the rest! The present chaos in Ezekiel criticism is an all-sufficient reply to this sort of objection.

My debt to all who have preceded me will, I believe, be apparent on every page. For more personal assistance it is pleasant to acknowledge the rich assets available for anyone so fortunate as to participate in the happy comradeship of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. I have drawn freely on the assistance of my colleagues, whose generosity has never failed to place their resources at my disposal. It is fitting, however, to mention in particular my colleague in the field of Old Testament, Professor Raymond A. Bowman, as well as Professors George G. Cameron and Henri Frankfort. Dr. Samuel I. Feigin has maintained a steady interest in the problem, assisting me far more than I can readily estimate. He has made many valuable suggestions which I have been happy to incorporate. I have frequently chatted with Professor A. T. Olmstead about my problems and views, but that my debt to him is specific and heavy will become apparent in the course of my discussion. It is a happiness to mention also my former colleague and friend of many years, Professor W. R. Taylor of the University of Toronto, whose continuing interest eventuated in the reading of a considerable part of the manuscript and helpful comments thereon. I am grateful as well to the Librarian of the University of Toronto, who has generously provided me with needed books during my summers in Ontario, where most of the actual writing of the study was done. Much as I owe to all these, I must, however, accord first place to the men and women of my advanced classes in the University of Chicago, from whom I have received stimulus and specific assistance as through the years I have again and again with succeeding groups worked through the problem of Ezekiel. Many points in the results now presented are primarily not mine but theirs. I should gladly give individual credit, but where all have contributed so much it would be invidious to mention only a few. I can scarcely be expected to give a full roster of my classes through these ten years! But each will recognize his share in the finished work and will, I hope, accept this blanket expression of my gratitude.

One feature of my discussion perhaps calls for comment. I have loaded it with translation of all the Hebrew phrases and words that come in a special way into the argument. For the Old Testament worker, this way seems at the least an aggravation and at the worst an impertinence. But my purpose has been by this means to make the detail of the argument intelligible to the non-Hebraist. It is hoped that the Old Testament scholar will be patient, then, in the interests of those whose specializations have led them in other directions.

The preparation of a study such as this may well seem peculiarly futile, if not mere dilettantism, in days of horror such as have become commonplace through these last three years. The very bases of human life, the fate of those things which alone make existence tolerable, is being determined through these days by the bomber, the battleship, and the armored division for a future which must appear very long to the measure of our little lives. To spend long hours in such a time over questions of the sort discussed herein may well be judged of no more significance than twiddling one's thumbs. Yet a moment's thought brings more sane outlook. The very terror and might of military brutality have revealed in a way not seen for many a day that the supreme arbiter of human destiny is not these but the things of the spirit. Human history is shaped not so much by earthquake and fire and mighty wind as by the still small voice. It should have been apparent so as never to be questioned that the paraphernalia of armed force is but a tool of human thinking, created to do its bidding and achieve its ends. The ancient claim yet remains profoundly true that as a man thinketh in his heart —not as he is organized and regimented and armed—so is he. And when the emphasis is put where it properly belongs, on human thinking, the biblical worker has come into his own realm. This is the abiding significance of the Bible, and this is the purpose of all the toil poured out by biblical scholarship: the molding of human thought. History shows more than one illustration of the explosive force of a great idea. And the Bible has been a prolific source of such. Against the expounder of the Bible it may still be charged that those who have turned the world upside down have come here also.

Yet the problem remains; for critical study, such as undertaken here, is not the stuff that sets men's minds afire. It is dull, prosaic, and coldly objective. In the end, it may be asked, who cares whether Ezekiel wrote all his book or none of it? It is as enticing as a jigsaw puzzle and, it may appear, as worthless. Yet here again we must walk by faith, of which we have learned anew the nature and the necessity and the power. In any area of knowledge investigation is commonly concerned with seeming petty results devoid of practical application. But the total advance of such knowledge has again and again transformed our ways or outlooks. Even within the field of biblical scholarship this is richly illustrated. The dull detail of criticial results and the much more dull confusion of critical argumentation have been profoundly instrumental in the making of the "modern" world of the spirit. So one does not bring to completion a study of this sort with a guilty feeling of having fiddled while the world was falling in ruins but rather with confidence that in a time of unparalleled human need he has done what he could. His results he sends out in humility but in faith that if they should prove of some little worth they may contribute to our common knowledge of truth which alone makes men free.

William A. Irwin

The Muldrew Lakes
Gravenhurst, Canada
September 9, 1942

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THE PROBLEM

THE PROBLEM

The problem of Ezekiel is threefold. Is the book the work of the prophet Ezekiel, alleged to have lived and taught through the early part of the sixth century B.C., or is it pseudonymous? Is it of united authorship? If not, how is it to be analyzed? And, third, where was it written, specifically in Palestine or in Babylonia? That there are other important questions is apparent; but, whatever their intrinsic worth, they are not _the_ problem of Ezekiel. Their solution is subsidiary to, or waits upon, the main issue which confronts the student of the book in this threefold unity.

Yet does not tradition provide the answer to all these questions? Indeed, in the Book of Ezekiel itself is it not written that in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel ben-Buzi, the priest, among the captives by the river Chebar in the land of Babylon, and there, he relates, "the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God"? And from that initial point onward throughout his book, with but one brief exception,[1] the story tells, in his own words apparently, of his visions and divine revelations through nearly twenty-five years of life and work among the exiled Jews.

It is a view of the prophet Ezekiel and of his book that has much to commend it. How else could it have held the loyal support of students of the Bible through more than twenty centuries? And to this day there are not lacking scholars of repute who consider this to be the most satisfying, the most credible, account of the matter. Yet in the light of other facts only a degree less obvious on the surface of things—facts which have become very familiar in recent study of the Book of Ezekiel—it is remarkable how this age-old view continued to be accepted, with but minor dissent, right through the intensive critical activity of the past century and a half when every tradition about the Bible and every a priori view was subjected to searching and sometimes hypercritical examination, frequently with results that not unnaturally shocked the pious as mere "destruction." Even into our own times, down to as late as twenty-five years ago and in several cases well within this period, scholars of standing were asserting that this book is in a privileged position among the books of the Old Testament and were interpreting it as practically in toto the work of the prophet-priest of the sixth century B.C.; from his hands it had come after suffering little worse than the accidents of scribal transmission. Here is a situation which might well move one to comment on the unevenness, if not indeed the pure accident, of scholarly progress. Perhaps some might deduce from it disturbing conclusions as to the fallibility of human thinking as a whole.

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[1] 24:24.

An extreme formulation of this traditional attitude, yet still so much a piece with it as to constitute, in a way, its classic statement, was the opinion expressed by Smend in 1880 that the whole book is a logical unity such that not a single section may be removed without ruining the whole.[2] S. R. Driver was more moderate but of the same point of view: "No critical question arises in connection with the authorship of the book, the whole from beginning to end bearing unmistakably the stamp of a single hand."[3] And the view persisted much later. So representative a work as Bewer's The Literature of the Old Testament treats the work of Ezekiel without the slightest modification of traditional concepts of his life and activity. Indeed, its critical statement is reminiscent of Smend's, Bewer says: "Ezekiel was an able writer. His book is very clearly arranged and in the main in strict chronological order with definite dates. . . . . Ezekiel's clear and logical mind is manifest in the arrangement.

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[2] "Das ganze Buch ist vielmehr die logische Entwicklung einer Reihe von Gedanken nach einem wohlüberlegten und z. Th. ganz schematischen Plane, man könnte kein Stück herausnehmen ohne das ganze Ensemble zu zerstören" (Rudolf Smend, Der Prophet Ezechiel [1880], p. xxi).

[3] Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament (4th ed., 1892), p. 261; (new ed., 1913), p. 279.

Some passages of hope which are now in the first, although they really belong to the second part, may have been put there by Ezekiel himself, for we know that he revised his book." However, Bewer does make the concession to advancing criticism that "not all repetitions come from him, many are due to an ill-edited text, and the occasional obscurities are the work of bad copyists."[4] Similar was the position of J. M. Powis Smith, who in the first edition of his The Prophets and Their Times (1925), at the outset of an exposition of Ezekiel's work that follows old, familiar lines, wrote: "The Book of Ezekiel records the activity of Ezekiel between July 593 B.C. and April 571 B.C. The materials constituting his book are for the most part arranged in chronological order, though the last date given in the book is found in 29:17."[5]

In point of time the first aspect of the threefold problem of Ezekiel to arise was that of the literary unity of the book. In 1798 an unnamed writer in the Monthly Magazine and British Register presented a brief study[6] which, in view of the prevalent attitude of his time toward biblical problems and of the course which scholarly investigation of the Book of Ezekiel was to follow for more than one hundred years, must be regarded as an astonishing example of independent thinking and astute insight. He says: "Professor Eichhorn has supported the opinion that the oracles of Ezekiel are genuine throughout, that the collective fragments ascribed to him were all really written by this poet. A dissonance of character in these compositions invites rather to embrace an opposite suspicion." It is then this "dissonance of character" which provides the clue for this earliest attempt to analyze the Book of Ezekiel. The writer speaks of the "identity of manner that pervades" the first twenty-four chapters: the author is "a man of busy imagination but of low and ignoble taste." But "from the XXVth to the XXXIIIrd chapter, inclusive, a distinct and loftier vein of poetry prevails." Examination leads the writer to believe that these were "official war songs"; and chapters 35, 38, and 39 have the same character. But now an odd feature enters the discussion. In 28:3 "the poet names himself," the author of these chapters is none other than the prophet Daniel! Whatever amusement the modern critic may find in such strange interpretation of this verse and the entire conclusion to which it leads, he cannot but feel deep respect and admiration for the keenness of observation and freedom of investigation here manifest. This is a scholar who in a later day might well have ranked with the best of Old Testament critics. As matters stand, he has given us the earliest example of modern criticism of the Book of Ezekiel. Unfortunately, his study seems to have been completely ignored; a hundred years passed before his problem began to be considered seriously.

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[4] The Literature of the Old Testament (1928), p. 183. The passage is unchanged in the reprinting of 1938.

[5] The Prophets and Their Times (Chicago, 1925), p. 161.

[6] "Concerning the Author of Some Poems Ascribed to Ezekiel," pp. 189-90.

But mention must be made of a still earlier work. In 1771 Oeder and Vogel had published their *Freye Untersuchungen*, of which Section IV (pp. 341-88) is entitled "Von den letzten 9 Kapiteln Ezechiels."[7] The discussion of this topic begins with great interest for the historian of the criticism of Ezekiel, for it raises immediately the question whether these nine chapters "zu des heiligen Propheten Ezechiels Buch gehören." But the essential element in this formulation of the question, which one is likely to overlook at first, is that word *Buch*. For, taking his departure from the well-known passage in Josephus' *Antiquities* x. 6. 335, that speaks of two books of Ezekiel, Oeder traces the problem with erudition and ability through early Christian literature and more recent discussions, to come at length to the conclusion that chapters 40-48 of our present Book of Ezekiel constitute this lost "second" book: a view which then Vogel indorses through the sixteen pages of his *Zugabe*. Neither author evidences any consciousness of the problem that has come to bulk large for the modern critic—whether this section of the book is Ezekiel's at all. Their most radical question is whether it is properly canonical. The real beginning of modern criticism of Ezekiel must be accorded to the British writer of 1798.[8]

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[7] *Freye Untersuchungen über einzige Bücher des Alten Testaments, vom Verfasser der christliche freyen Untersuchung über die so gennante Offenbarung Johannis mit Zugaben und Anmerkungen*, herausgegeben von Georg Johann Ludwig Vogel (Beysitzer philosophischen Facultät zu Halle, bey Johann Christian Hendel, 1771).

In 1832 another strand of the complicated problem of Ezekiel came before the attention of biblical scholarship. In that year Zunz raised the question of the book's authenticity. He expressed grave doubts of the commonly accepted view and assembled an imposing list of peculiarities which led him to the belief that the book stands in closer relation to the Persian period than is generally supposed.[9] Forty years later he reasserted his opinion,[10] adding considerable new evidence, and advanced to the position that the book as a whole is from the time of the _sopherim_. While he does not state specifically that the book was written in Palestine, that is perhaps a legitimate deduction from his argument. Heretical as was this view for the criticism of the nineteenth century,[11] yet it did not lack other exponents. In 1884 Seinecke, in the second volume of his _Geschichte des Volkes Israel_, presented reasoned conclusions that were not far from Zunz's position. He says that the book is commonly dated four hundred years too early. He subjects the book to a detailed examination, which, so he holds, reveals that its contents are incompatible with the traditional dating. The account of Zedekiah's blindness (chap. 12) is too exact to have been prophecy; the book is full of phrases from Jeremiah and even from Daniel; the language has closest affinities with that of the latest books of the Old Testament; the word _msurah_ ("measure") in 4:11 is evidence of a time after the

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[8] I understand that in 1792 Corodi published a discussion which in some way took account of the problem; but I have been unable to secure a copy of the work.

[9] _Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträgen der Juden_ (Berlin, 1832), pp. 157-62.

[10] "Bibelkritisches," _Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft_, XXVII (1873), 676-81.

[11] See the reply by Graetz, "Die Echtheit des Buches des Propheten Ezechiel," _Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums_, XXIII (1874), 433-46.

Romans had become influential in Asia. Briefly, "nach den Ergebnissen meiner Untersuchungen sind die Vorstellungen von Ezechiel als einem Manne des sechsten vorchristlichen Jahrhunderts, von dem Deuteronium unter Josia, von der Abschliessung des Gesetzes um 444 vor. Chr., von der Entstehung der Septuaginta oder wenigstens des griechischen Uebersetzung des Gesetzes unter Ptolemäus Philadelphus grundlose annahmen."[12]

Somewhat more moderate was the view of Winckler, who, urging that the book is a compilation of many oracles, just as Isaiah and Jeremiah, came to the opinion that its dates relate, not to the first capture of Jerusalem, but to the decree of Cyrus almost sixty years later. He was specific on the matter that can be deduced only from Zunz and Seinecke: the book was written in Jerusalem.[13]

It will be apparent that these views have their sequel and development in a famous feature of recent criticism of the Book of Ezekiel; but, before following this line further, we must first trace the development of other aspects of the problem.

Questions of the literary unity of the book began to arise, it has already been pointed out, in the eighteenth century; yet such investigation received its first vitalizing stimulus from textual study, in the way that literary and textual criticism have frequently lain close together. The name of Hitzig deserves prominent mention at this point, but actually the beginnings long antedate his work; for septuagintal variants had compelled attention to textual questions in Ezekiel as in other books of the Old Testament. Ewald had employed this evidence in an effort to secure a more authentic text.[14] Nonetheless, the importance of Hitzig's contribution[15] may not be minimized. From the viewpoint of today his criticism is a strange blend of marked conservatism and considerable freedom, if not rashness, in textual matters. He follows Greek readings somewhat freely and even introduces at times his own conjectures. However, closer to our problem of the moment was his view that many glosses had been introduced into the book through an inability of the scribes to understand its late language. Still more far-reaching were the unrealized implications when he reasoned that several of the dates are arbitrary and unauthentic and that references in some chapters indicate a time considerably later than that ascribed by tradition. Yet, on the whole, Hitzig's concessions were modest. Doubtless he would have been shocked had he foreseen that in them lay in embryo the whole long process that has progressively reduced the bulk of material accredited by critics to the prophet Ezekiel. Cornill's remarkable volume comes into consideration likewise at this stage of the critical development, for though its emphasis was on textual matters its interests continue of high importance to this day.[16] But with Bertholet's commentary[17] a notable step forward was taken, for he admitted the presence of interpolations in the Book of Ezekiel, of which the most important is 27:9b-25a. Also he pointed out that certain passages raise a question whether Ezekiel did not himself submit his work to a late revision.

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[12] Geschichte des Volkes Israel, Vol. II: Vom Exil bis zur Zerstörung Jerusalems durch die Römer (Göttingen, 1884), pp. iii, 1-20.

[13] Altorientalische Forschungen (3d ser., 1902), pp. 135-55.

[14] Heinrich Ewald, Die Propheten des Alten Bundes (Stuttgart, 1841), II, 218-22, 387.

However, the publication of Kraetzschmar's commentary[18] marked an epoch in Ezekiel research. It brought into prominence the question of the unity of the book, but also its solution of this problem became the standard point of departure or the target of criticism for the next twenty-five years, and it still remains one of the famous theories of Ezekiel criticism. He was impressed by the number of duplicates in the book—he mentions 7:1-9 in particular, though immediately adducing a considerable further list of such passages—and drew the conclusion that the book must have been put out in two recensions, one using first person, and the other third. But, since it is inconceivable that Ezekiel would himself have introduced such variants, our present book must be the work of a redactor; however, we are in ignorance of his period except that he preceded the Greek translation.

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[15] Ferdinand Hitzig, Der Prophet Ezechiel erklärt ("Kurtzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament" [Leipzig, 1847]).

[16] Carl Heinrich Cornill, Das Buch des Propheten Ezechiel (Leipzig, 1886).

[17] Alfred Bertholet, Das Buch Hesekiel erklärt ("Kurtzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament" [Tübingen, 1897]).

[18] Richard Kraetzschmar, Das Buch Ezechiel übersetzt und erklärt ("Handkommentar zum Alten Testament" [Göttingen, 1900]).

A fair sample of the criticism of the following decades is provided by the work of Hans Schmidt, which is interesting alike for its cautious conservatism and for its unconscious concession to the future. He says: "The book shows in details that it was not written in a single effort. Displacements of passages from their chronological order, doublets, repeated introductions within a single passage, separation of passages properly belonging together, later comments added to sections all show clearly enough how the prophet had put stone to stone. But in the end all holds together in a manner quite different from the other prophets. The enthroned God seated above his people in the cleansed temple is the picture which the book presents throughout from the beginning."[19] These doublets, displacements, and the like were to lead to more fruitful results before many years had gone. Indeed, this process had already set in before Schmidt wrote, if only he had been sensitive to it. Herrmann's Ezechielstudien published in 1908, still more the matured views set forth in his commentary[20] in 1924, were not less than revolutionary. Appropriately, Herntrich remarks: "With Herrmann's Ezechielstudien the work on this prophet came to a new level. Here for the first time was presented a real, systematic analysis of the book."[21] It is a judgment fully merited by the importance of Herrmann's contribution, still we do well to keep in mind also Herntrich's adverse appraisal, for he objects that Herrmann puts himself in an impossible position through an overanxiety to retain every possible shred for Ezekiel; this leads him to explain as later work of the prophet passages that are obviously but intrusions and additions, even though in some cases they distort the sense of the original utterance. It may be added, too, that penetrating as are Herrmann's insights, valuable as his work still remains, yet his criteria of analysis can in general be considered only very imperfect.

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[19] Die grossen Propheten ("Die Schriften des Alten Testaments," Vol. II, No. 2 [Göttingen, 1915]), p. 460.

[20] Ezechiel übersetzt und erklärt ("Kommentar zum Alten Testament" [1924]).

In the strange way that major contributions to the problem of Ezekiel have shown a tendency to synchronize, this same year 1924 saw also the publication of Hölscher's _Hesekiel, der Dichter und das Buch_. It is even more famous than Herrmann's commentary and has had an influence on the course of criticism not less profound. The combined impact of both was such that in that year biblical criticism stepped suddenly into the modern era of Ezekiel study.

Hölscher's position is so well known that nothing is called for here save a few comments. His demonstration of the essentially poetic nature of much of the genuine Ezekiel, notwithstanding the severe criticism to which his position has been subjected, still stands as one of the high points in the study of this book since the day when Hananiah ben-Hezekiah burned three hundred barrels of oil during his exposition that saved the book from being relegated to the Genizah.[22] Not so well recognized, however, is the fact that Hölscher admitted the existence of original prose passages as well. It is false, then, to hold that he made poetic form the touchstone of genuineness. But in the end this consideration seems to have weighed heavily with him; to what extent he was thus in fault will become apparent only when one has in turn criticized Hölscher's critics and then examined in detail the structure of the Book of Ezekiel.

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[21] V. Herntrich, _Ezechielprobleme_ (Giessen, 1932), p. 4.

[22] See, _inter alia,_ Zeitlin, _An Historical Study of the Canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures_ (Philadelphia, 1933), pp. 2-3.

But Hölscher has come in also for severe criticism on the grounds that his results are too drastic. Out of a total of 1,273 verses in the entire book, he has retained for the prophet less than 170 in whole or in part. He admits that his work is not unlike Duhm's on Jeremiah; and scholarship has accorded him a like fate. Even eleven years later, when the heat of critical debate had abated and the sense of novelty had gone from Hölscher's alleged wickedness, Bertholet could not refrain from commenting on the radical nature of his work.[23] But this is a peculiarly futile objection. The radicalism or conservatism of any critical result is primarily a matter of complete indifference; the only important questions are what supporting facts have been adduced and how dependable is the process of reasoning that has yielded the result claimed. And, at the worst, Hölscher is by a safe margin of some 170 verses, in whole or in part, less radical than certain other famous critics, for they delete the entire Book of Ezekiel; still worse, they delete Ezekiel himself also!

Yet Hölscher's methods are open to serious criticism; hence his results are not less unstable. The astonishing thing is that with such imperfect tools he accomplished so much of abiding worth. Briefly, he has relied far too extensively on an identification of editorial intrusions which can scarcely be adjudged better than pure subjectivism. One searches in vain through his work for clear and defensible criteria by which to distinguish the original Ezekiel from later accretions. Doubtless Hölscher employed some better standard than can be evoked from his work; yet careful study there reveals nothing but a priori decisions that certain types of passages are late, hence spurious. Even his major criteron of poetic form does not counterbalance this mood, for he rejects chapter 7, which, though in parts badly preserved, contains some of the most vigorous and vital verse in the entire book. But for him it is full of eschatological phrases and so must go. Likewise, chapter 6 is "rhetorische Prosa"; he failed to detect the original poetic oracles that lie imbedded therein. Hölscher did a great piece of work, but his results have all the defects of pioneering.

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[23] Hesekiel (Tübingen, 1936), p. xii.

In Volume III of the revised edition of his great Geschichte des Volkes Israel published in 1927, Kittel recounts the activity of the prophet Ezekiel.[24] The treatment on the whole is conservative, as one would expect of Kittel. He does, however, admit the presence of poetry of a high order in the book; but this is slight concession to Hölscher's work, for Kittel's poems are those everyone recognizes, such as chapters 19 and 27. On the other hand, he is critical of Hölscher's results, charging that one is frequently uncertain who was the Hebrew poet, Ezekiel or Hölscher. He believes Ezekiel to have been of abnormal psychology and, relevant to his dual character as priest and prophet, summarizes epigrammatically that Ezekiel was a man with two souls in his breast —a saying that has been responsible for not a little confused thinking about the problem through the succeeding years.

However, in the same period the other strand of the Ezekiel problem with which we began, that of the pseudonymity of the book, had received a contribution. This was Millar Burrows' Literary Relations of Ezekiel (1925). The title suggests faithfully its character. It is an examination of the relations of the Book of Ezekiel with other bodies of Old Testament literature. Anyone who has worked with this sort of problem realizes that the demonstration of affinities is a relatively simple matter; the second step, that of establishing the direction of influence, is difficult frequently to the point of complete impossibility. Cautious and well-balanced as Burrows' judgment shows itself to be, it is not always clear that his assumption of dependence of the Book of Ezekiel is well taken. Indeed, he is ready to admit in cases a possibility of the reverse. But in still further cases of alleged interrelation the question is, to say the least, wide open whether the situation is not one of dependence on the the Book of Ezekiel. However this may be, Burrows came to the conclusion that the book is later than I and II Kings, Isaiah chapter 14, and the completion of the Pentateuch, and "probably later than Hg., Zc., Ob., and Is. 13, 23, 34f., 40-55 and 56-66"; it is "perhaps later" than Joel, the Aramaic part of Daniel and Zec. 9:11—11:3. He sums it up: "Either Ez is a late pseudepigraphon, therefore, or its origin and history must have been somewhat as Hölscher supposes, though the date to which the present investigation points is much later than that to which Hölscher assigns the principal redaction."[25]

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[24] 3 Band; 1 Hälfte; 6 Kapitel: "Führende Männer in Babel: Ezechiel," pp. 144-80.

But it will be obvious even from the measure of advance in the problem indicated by the literature surveyed hitherto that precisely the alternative which Burrows presents is the major issue in regard to the authorship of the Book of Ezekiel. And Burrows does not evade the difficulty. He goes on: "Is there any portion of the book which we can confidently attribute to a contemporary of Jeremiah?" While once again manifesting great reserve and fairness, he comes finally to the conclusion that the book is a collection of extempore, unedited pronouncements, hence to be regarded as of unified authorship. Thus "the view of Ez as a product of the late pre-Maccabean period is not only possible but very probable."

Burrows closes with reference to the views of Professor Torrey. However, it was five years before these were given to the scholarly world[26] in the latter's now-famous Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy (1930). It is a book well deserving the publicity it has received. No fair-minded reader can but be impressed with the matured scholarship here manifested and with the cogency of the arguments adduced. Also in regard to Torrey's results it must be borne in mind that the approximate identity of conclusions of the brilliant succession of scholars, whose work we have briefly indicated, from Zunz onward compels a powerful presumption of some soundness. In other words, there is some valid element in the position: there is some dependable ground for associating the Book of Ezekiel with the third or second century B.C. The question is: What is that dependable element and what is the true nature of this association? For Torrey's effort to make the book a pseudepigraph simply will not do. It is nothing of the sort. That the intense moral earnestness of the book, amounting at times to actual brutality and indecency, is nothing but the dilettante amusement of some late writer thus cudgeling the long-dead subjects of King Manasseh passes all reasonable thought. The same consideration excludes the polemic origin which Torrey claims for the book. It is far too much concerned about real problems of conduct and the vital religious needs of living men to be explained away as a contribution to the dispute whether Jerusalem or Gerizim was the place where men ought to worship. Comparison with the great pseudepigraphon of the Old Testament, the Book of Daniel, serves fully to evidence this distinction. The book is not a pseudepigraph, unless one is to divest this word of its meaning in the way Hölscher did.[27]

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[25] Millar Burrows, Literary Relations of Ezekiel (New Haven, 1925), p. 102.

[26] His attitude, however, was already known; in his Ezra Studies (1910), p. 288, n. 8, he had said: "Ezekiel I believe to be a pseudepigraphon written in the Greek period."

There is no call at this time to revive fires now cold by entering into a discussion of Torrey's position; it was widely debated in the years following the publication of the book.[28] The present purpose is served by pointing out that a basic weakness in the argument is that, unlike Winckler, Torrey treats the Book of Ezekiel as a unit. This matter is obviously of such acute importance that one should expect supporting evidence presented with Torrey's characteristic scope and cogency. But instead he merely remarks that when the few "editorial alterations," which he believes he has identified, "are removed the book is substantially as it left the hand of its author."[29] It is highly disappointing. Doubtless he, as Hölscher in his position, had reasons that satisfied his own mind, but the careful reader will raise objections at almost every step in his advance on just this ground. Granted, if one will, that Gog of Magog is none other than Alexander, what does it signify except to show that the Book of Ezekiel contains one late and presumably spurious passage? Granted that Burrows' results, to which Torrey refers, are valid, does this mean more than that a considerable bulk of the book has late affinities? Yet, whatever its deficiency, one can but conclude that, when Torrey's able argument did not carry conviction, the case for the pseudonymity of the Book of Ezekiel may be dismissed as lost.

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[27] Op. cit., pp. 40-42.

[28] See, inter alia, Spiegel, "Ezekiel or Pseudo-Ezekiel," Harvard Theological Review, XXIV (1931), 245-321; Budde, "Zum Eingang des Buches Ezechiel," Journal of Biblical Literature, L (1931), 20-41; Barnes, "The Scene of Ezekiel's Ministry," Journal of Theological Studies, XXXV (1934), 163-69.

We have noted that Burrows recognized the validity of this question of the structure of the book and handled it with some caution and reserve; though he came to the view that the book is a unit, yet it can scarcely be considered that he intended his casual remarks to suffice for a full-length discussion. However, this deficiency in Torrey's argument his friend George Dahl undertook to make up in an essay entitled, "Crisis in Ezekiel Research."[30] But the essay as a whole is too uncritically under the influence of Torry's work, and an inexcusable deficiency is that in a discussion of the criticism of Ezekiel he, a Yale man, gives no consideration to the relevant Babylonian documents published by his own university.[31] But, further, he brings no new consideration to bear on this question of the unity of Ezekiel; his arguments are merely a résumé of the ideas commonly held in our "times of ignorance" before we awakened to the existence of a problem of Ezekiel. If Dahl has adequately interpreted Torrey's mind on this point, then we may ignore the latter's assumption of the unity of the Book of Ezekiel.

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[29] Pseudo-Ezekiel, p. 112.

[30] Quantulacumque: Studies Presented to Kirsopp Lake (1937), pp. 265-84.

[31] See A. T. Olmstead, History of Palestine and Syria (New York, 1931), p. 535.

A more weighty effort to this end was Kessler's Innere Einheitlichkeit des Buches Ezechiel, published in 1926, hence with no conscious relevance to Torrey's views. On the contrary, as its date might suggest, it aimed at controverting Hölscher. But the notable fact is that the title of the book is misleading, for Kessler admits the doubtful or spurious origin of considerable elements in the Book of Ezekiel, hence, we might say, he argues for the unity only of the large mass of the book. Thus in chapters 16 and 23, the "Kernstücke" are, respectively, verses 1-44 and 1-35; in the short chapter 15, verse 8 is to be deleted; in 27, verses 9b-25 are spurious. On the other hand, his insights failed to detect the secondary character of the latter part of chapter 36, and obviously he wrote several years too early to employ the conclusive evidence which we now possess. It will be seen, then, that Kessler, notwithstanding his announced title, is far from the position of Torrey and Dahl but belongs rather with the critical tradition that produced Herrmann's work and, indeed, Hölscher's as well. Remote as are his results from those of Hölscher, his quarrel with him is really one of method and proportion; he is demanding only a larger measure of "inner unity" than the other admitted.

Kessler's work deserves a further word of appraisal, however, for his little book is of a value quite out of proportion to its bulk. Its statement of guiding principles is an excellent survey of sound critical method. But no mere statement, he recognizes, can be final; it is in grave danger of merely moving in a circle. The ultimate test is one's careful handling of details; and the critic's final guide must be his familiarity with the idiosyncrasies of thought and style of the author under study.[32] But one feels grave uneasiness whether Kessler has himself maintained this high level. Certainly his survey is not comprehensive; his announced defense of the unity of Ezekiel would fail on this ground alone, for he examines only fifteen chapters of the first thirty-nine in the book, then gives a section to a general treatment of chapters 40-48. Such selection appears to be a mere rejoinder to Hölscher rather than an independent study of his topic. That is, his method has fallen to a denial of claims of spuriousness. Legitimate and in some measure necessary as this may be, it reduces the case to the proverbial difficulty of seeking to prove a negative. Be this as it may, much more to the point is the question how adequately Kessler has applied his eminently sound principle that familiarity with an author's characteristics is the final guide in a quest of the genuine. This familiarity, he admits, is to be won only by first isolating certain indisputably original passages for careful study. To his credit, let it be realized that he has here put his finger on the sore deficiency of Ezekiel research. This is so obviously the proper starting-point that we would have supposed it to have been employed from the beginning. But, on the contrary, criticism of the Book of Ezekiel still cries aloud for application of just this simple principle. We turn, then, with quickened interest to follow Kessler's quest. But alas for the vision splendid; he is soon grinding his own ax just like too many other critics of the Old Testament! He begins with chapter 15 (pp. 35-39) and well interprets verses 1-5 as an "Allegorie" about vine-wood, which is good for nothing. Then verses 6-7 apply this to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. So all is "eine tadellos Einheit." But how now? Where is the announced demonstration of the indisputable originality of some section of this short chapter? Where is the detailed examination of style and thought to familiarize us with the original Ezekiel so that he may be readily recognized in less obvious passages? The answer is too clear. Kessler has given us assumption instead of evidence. Still worse, we catch him in the very act of vitiating such evidence as he does use. He points out that in verses 6-8 the people of Jerusalem are threatened with the same fate as the vine stick; but, he goes on, the other thought is implicit there, that these people are of no worth. But this is precisely what these verses do not say. This thought, which he rightly recognizes to be central in the "Allegorie," is notably absent from the interpretation in verses 6-8. The alleged unity of the chapter, then, is Kessler's, not that of the biblical text. And this is some of the best of his argument. Near the other extreme must be located his discussion of chapter 34 (pp. 80-81). His great contribution to it is that the chapter is of united theme, the several aspects of which are presented in turn! And this proves its united authorship! Could anything be more childish?

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[32] Cf. the striking emphasis by Cornill upon the necessity for this qualification of the text critic (op. cit., p. 4).

Kessler came in sight of a revolutionary contribution to Ezekiel research. But he missed his way.

By one of those remarkable coincidences that mark the history of Ezekiel research, there was in press at the very moment of Torrey's publication another book which was to present (quite independently) at several highly contentious points a solution of the problem almost identical. This was James Smith's The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel: A New Interpretation (1931). It is astonishing to find him arguing, just as Torrey, that references to the pagan worship in Jerusalem demand a dating prior to the Reform of Josiah (pp. 18-20). He is in agreement also, though again by a different process of reasoning, that Ezekiel worked in Palestine. And, still more amazing, he holds (once more on grounds different from Torrey's) that the prophecies relate to the reign of Manasseh. At this point, however, he parts company. For him Ezekiel was a real prophet of the seventh century B.C. But he was a northerner, and his ministry was to North Israel.

This latter view of Smith's was effectively refuted by Harford in a careful study of the occurrences of the phrase "House of Israel" in the Book of Ezekiel.[33] It was to have a very mild echo, however, in the commentary by I. G. Matthews,[34] though the latter's general position is far different from Smith's. On the unity of the book Smith is as unsatisfactory as Torrey. He criticizes its accepted divisions into two or three or four sections: "None of these schemes go far below the surface. Within these sections there are collections of oracles, independent in time and content, some of them comparatively short, strung together loosely like pearls on a thread."[35] Though he concedes that "accretions, glosses and alterations may be discovered,"[36] yet a study of his argument fails to reveal any point at which it takes serious account of such false material. Still worse, he is oblivious of the question of how we are to recognize them; he merely lays down the principle that "there are no grounds for the erasure of any phrase or passage that might have come from Ezekiel, that fits in with the period in which he lived, and that harmonizes with the actual conditions of his time."[37] A worse denial of sound critical method it is difficult to conceive. In the end we are left in complete uncertainty whether the passages crucial to his argument may not actually be among those "accretions" which he admits. His entire argument falls to the ground; his contribution to the problem is only one more voice in the growing claim that Ezekiel worked in Palestine.

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[33] Battersby Harford, Studies in the Book of Ezekiel (Cambridge, 1935), pp. 77-101.

[34] Ezekiel ("American Commentary on the Old Testament" [Philadelphia, 1939]).

Conclusive demonstration of this position was not long to wait. And then it was presented with considerations far more sound and cogent than either Torrey or Smith had employed. Herntrich's Ezechielprobleme (1932) made this question a major interest. In passage after passage he was at pains to point out that the traditional Babylonian localization of the prophet is impossible: the oracle under consideration could have had meaning only in Judah, frequently only in Jerusalem. The strength of Herntrich's position, however, is his detailed analysis of the book, chapter by chapter, to identify its original kernel. Particularly notable is his treatment of chapters 1-3, where his refinement of Herrmann's and Hölscher's separation of the vision from the imagery of the throne-chariot is highly commendable. By similar methods, which we may describe rather cursorily as application of the familiar criteria of consistency, style, and faithfulness to the situation and to the development of ideas, he carries his study through the book, arriving at results that may be conceded to have advanced its criticism. He regards as spurious the entirety of chapters 25-32, 35, and 40-48; for the rest, deletions more or less minor leave us the genuine work of Ezekiel.

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[35] Op. cit., p. 8. [36] Ibid., p. 5. [37] Ibid.

An important feature of Herntrich's work is his repudiation of Hölscher's poetic criterion; he is scornful of the reputed poems. How far he admits in the end the existence of actual poetry is difficult to determine, for he makes no comment on the form of an obviously poetic chapter like 19. At this point he lays himself open to criticism. Beyond question some of Hölscher's poems go limpingly in the Hebrew, yet the matter is not to be dismissed so lightly as Herntrich would have us do. There can be not a doubt that Hölscher's point is valid, whether or not we agree with him in the details of his identification of the original poems and his recovery of their form. Here is a criterion that must certainly be used with caution, which though when so employed provides a highly important line of evidence for the criticism of the book. We may call attention to Herntrich's comments on the alleged poetic form of chapter 15, to which he returns at several points, as illustrating well the unsoundness of his reasoning when he has permitted himself to be governed by presupposition. But as well his entire discussion is dominated too largely by his besetting concern to demonstrate that Ezekiel worked in Palestine. In this, as we have noted, he made a major contribution to our understanding of the book; but his analysis is thereby thrown out of balance. His treatment of chapter 6 will serve to show the inadequacy of his methods. He divides the chapter, quite properly, into the sections 1-7, 8-10, and 11-14. The first is original, the second is a "later, exilic addition," and the third is dismissed as "giving the impression of a later imitation." At only one point will this course commend itself under careful examination; verses 8-10 are certainly spurious. But to accept 1-7 without further analysis is an undiscriminating judgment that argues a complete blurring of the critical faculty. And 11-14, while in part "later," yet contain a passage that cannot by any reasonable criticism be relegated to the class of imitation: it is genuine beyond any doubt.

Harford's Studies in the Book of Ezekiel (1935) need delay us but briefly. Apart from its excursi, one on the divine names in Ezekiel, the other, as already noted, on the phrase, "House of Israel," the book is valuable primarily as a critique.[38] On its positive side it adds little if anything to Herntrich's results, on which it leans heavily.

From this lengthy debate we have merged in the succeeding years into the era of newer commentaries on Ezekiel, of which there are now three—Cooke's (in the "International Critical Commentary" series),[39] Bertholet's (in the "Handbuch zum Alten Testament"),[40] and that by I. G. Matthews already mentioned. The impression thus gained that the major critical problem of the book is solved and so we can now put together results in approximately final form is soon dissipated. Cooke's commentary was undertaken thirty years ago,[41] and its appearance in 1936 meant little more than that the author was at last able to bring the task to completion. That it delayed so long was a great advantage, for Cooke was thus able to profit by the protracted critical discussion of recent years; but that it is far from final will appear presently. Bertholet's volume was likewise called forth by the demands of a series. And whatever may have been the impelling motives in Matthew's publication in 1939, he was himself first to point out that his conclusions are in places highly tentative. To these, for our present purpose we must add consideration of the work of Berry, whose interest in the problem through many years, as evidenced by several detailed studies, produced more recently an article on "The Composition of the Book of Ezekiel."[42]

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[38] See, too, Kuhl, "Zur Geschichte der Hesekiel-Forschung," Theologische Rundschau, V (1933), 92-118.

[39] A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel (1936).

[40] Hesekiel (1936) (to be distinguished from his commentary on Ezekiel of 1897).

[41] See the announcement of volumes in Harper's Amos and Hosea (1910), but contrast that in Gray's Numbers (1906) and Driver's Deuteronomy (1895).

[42] Journal of Biblical Literature, LVIII (1939), 163-75.

If now we seek to gauge the measure of our advance by the agreement of these four, it is seen to be meager in the extreme. On the question of Ezekiel's Palestinian location, which has haunted criticism through many years, three of the writers are agreed though they are less certain whether he went to Babylonia in the end. But Cooke, after a superficial treatment of Herntrich's argument, decides to stand with tradition. The other great issue, that of the unity of the book, we may take as settled, for the one single point at which all four agree is that the book is composite. This is progress, but discouragingly slight. That the laborious and lengthy discussion which we have sketched should yield no more than this of assured result may give pardonable grounds for recalling the old proverb about the mountain that travailed and brought forth—a mouse! Still it is solid gain; and for that let us thank God and take courage. The future may yet hold better things.

If now we look below the surface of this pleasing harmony, we encounter sudden disillusionment. True, all seem, on better or worse grounds, to favor the view that the compilation of our Book of Ezekiel began with the prophet himself—though, indeed, Berry is not very sure of it. But from this point onward the four go happily their four separate ways; there is not a single major critical issue on which they are agreed. Matthews believes in a "Babylonian editor" soon after the prophet's lifetime and "scribal activity" from "500 to 400 B.C. or later." Cooke sees "successive editors" at work. Berry is equally vague; but Bertholet clings to a modified form of Kraetschmar's dual recension theory, although these are not distinguished by first and third person and the second recension was not done by Ezekiel himself. Cooke and Bertholet hold, the latter precariously, to the traditional genuineness of chapters 40-48; the other two are satisfied that the section is late. In addition, Berry contributes his own special heresy that everything after chapter 24, as well as several whole chapters preceding, is entirely spurious. Matthews and Berry again are opposed to the other two on the originality of the dates given in the book. When it comes to poetry, Cooke swings over to Matthew's side in approval of the basic validity of Hölscher's discovery. Berry says nothing about it; but Bertholet is caustic in his repudiation, though he makes grudging concession to the general position by admitting a few poems, some of which are not in Hölscher's list. And when we go into further details, examining the analysis of successive chapters and the identification of secondary material, we gain only additional realization of the complete confusion in which the matter stands. The fact is clear that we have made progress, certain and solid; but beyond a most meager advance the criticism of the Book of Ezekiel at this moment is in an uncertainty that merits castigation as utter and unrelieved chaos.

Now, the reason for this situation is clear. The study of the book has evolved as yet no clear criteria of originality that may be applied with reasonable assurance to its detailed analysis. All our questions—certainly all in which we have just now observed the complete bewilderment of our commentators—depend directly and crucially on an identification of the genuine Ezekiel. But how are we to accomplish this? Presumably we must think, in the first place, of the traditional tools of the critic—matters of consistency, style, historic situation, and development, which we noted that Herntrich used effectively in his analysis of chapters 1-3, Probably a refining of the use of these would carry us a significant distance forward. But the weakness of our three recent commentaries—here we drop Berry out of consideration since the brevity of his discussion gives no basis for evaluating his methods—is exactly at this point. To greater or less extent they have given us a priori views and subjective conclusions.

Cooke is frank to admit his bias; it is a predilection for a completely uncritical and ill-considered theory of the method of divine revelation, which unfortunately can be actually detected at several points in the very act of vitiating his judgment. He says: "We may start with our minds made up against allowing supernatural influence under any form, or we may believe in the action of the divine Spirit upon the human; we shall arrive at different results. In dealing with a work of prophecy the latter point of view seems to be the more reasonable" (p. vi). But, further, he approaches the critical problem through an examination of the dates in the book, and then after a trivial and shallow argument he concludes that "Ezekiel may himself have intended to give dates to his oracles" (p. xix). To our consternation he employs this clumsy result as the clue that opens up his entire analysis. He says, "In part I [i.e., chaps. 1-24] the passages which immediately follow the dates and allude to definite occasions may be regarded as the work of Ezekiel" (p. xxiv). To this he adds a further criterion, "There can be little doubt about the poems embedded in the prose....even Hölscher assigns them to the prophet" (pp. xxiv-xxv). But how are we to identify these? For on just this issue there is a wide difference of opinion. And Cooke gives no clue that we may follow; we are merely to accept his ex cathedra list of five such poems, one of which (chap. 19), however, is not at all "embedded in the prose"—and, Berry rightly suggests, neither is it Ezekiel's![43] Now we must grant that in all probability Cooke had better reasons than these for his decisions; and it is a pleasure to attest that his commentary is by no means as negligible as his own statement of principles would suggest. Yet in the end we cannot escape the conclusion that his handling of the problem has been inept and trifling.

If we pursue the matter into details of Cooke's commentary, we find, along with much that beyond dispute is excellent, just this same inadequate treatment of critical questions. Chapter 6 will serve as an example. His position is that "the original address can be followed in vv. 1-4 and 13-14; vv. 5-7 do little more than repeat what has just been said; vv. 8-10 deal with the exiles abroad, not with the people at home; while vv. 11 and 12 stand by themselves, a fierce comment on vv. 1-4, 13 f. or vv. 8-10, and no part of the address" (p. 68). But now why is the original matter terminated at verse 4? Why not include verse 5 also? That it merely repeats what has been said is false. But Cooke adds that "the second half [of vs. 5] cannot belong to vv. 1-4, for your bones is out of place in an address to mountains;....the sentence....has a certain vigor, which suggests that it may have belonged to vv. 1-4....; its present position however is unsuitable, because according to v. 4 the altars have been destroyed" (p. 69)—considerations deserving no better judgment than that they are typical of the stupidity which for many a year has blackened the course of Old Testament criticism. It is not worth our while to go on into Cooke's discussion of verse 11 ff.; it is of a piece with the rest. But two features of his treatment of this brief chapter are noteworthy; first, he has never sensed the basic issue whether or not anything at all is from Ezekiel: he merely assumes it, or at most seems to think that "a certain vigor" of expression is sufficient evidence. Yet, surely, we must find some better way of identifying with reasonable certainty at least a minimum of Ezekiel's material, then perhaps we can establish a few criteria with which to push forward cautiously. The second comment is that Cooke's crucial failure is a loose and careless thinking that would make havoc of any critical principles, however excellent.

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[43] Ibid., p. 166.

Turning to Bertholet, we find matters not much, if any, improved. His faithfulness to the temper of the distant days when he wrote his former commentary on Ezekiel is evidenced in a continuing loyalty to Kraetschmar's theory of a dual recension; he revises the theory, rejecting the differentiation of first- and third-person documents. Instead, many doublets are Ezekiel's own, his reaffirmation of certain ideas at a second period of his career. But, on the other hand, many repetitions are the work of editors. However, Bertholet has taken note of the advance of Ezekiel studies. In particular he has profited by Herntrich's investigation. Ezekiel, he concedes, began his work in Palestine. But then he is in difficulties to get him to Babylonia. To this end he offers the shabby theory that chapter 12, in which the prophet carried out his goods in a symbol of going into captivity, represents his departure from Jerusalem; then, after some delay at "another place" in Palestine, he had reached Babylonia by the year 584, the "thirteenth year," which Bertholet believes to be the correct dating of the vision in chapter 1.

Bertholet believes that this theory of dual recension is an important critical discovery, particularly the view that in some cases the doublets are both from Ezekiel. But what does it accomplish? One is somewhat bewildered as to the bearing it can have on the basic issue of how we are to recognize genuine material in this book, if any exists. In actual practice it works out that Bertholet merely seeks to emend the text, making large use of LXX; he frees it of what he decides must be glosses; and then the remainder—obviously, the great bulk of the book—he separates into individual oracles, deciding whether these contain doublets, and, if so, which are genuine. An example is the treatment of chapter 13. By some arbitrary addition to verse 2 he finds a lengthy and continuous doublet running through verses 2-4, 6, 9-12, and 15-16. This, he claims, might be genuine; but, if so, it must be late, probably after Ezekiel went to Babylonia. However, literary connections with passages in Jeremiah and Micah lead to the conclusion that it originated with the editors. For purposes of comparison, it is interesting to look for a moment also at his handling of chapter 6. He finds considerable glossing throughout the chapter but retains as basically genuine verses 1-5 and verse 11, a phrase in 12_b_, most of 13_b_, and practically all of 14.

Now what can one say about criticism of such sort? It is so devoid of objectivity that little can be done other than dismiss it quietly as a hopeless mess of a priori conclusions inextricably confused with considerable sage comment. Unless we can do something better than this in biblical criticism, then let us in honesty drop the whole matter, confessing that we have only been amusing ourselves with futile speculation!

It is a relief to turn to Matthews. His unpretentious little volume is easily the best of the three. It is clear-cut as daylight, and as refreshing, to leave behind Cooke's confused supernaturalism along with Bertholet's musings about doublets and triplets and to find Matthews speaking freely of "the composite nature of every part of the book" and telling us that "the Book of Ezekiel apparently came into being in much the same way as Isaiah or Jeremiah; each was the result of a process, and may be termed a library rather than a book."[44] But, then, what in turn is Matthews' method? How did he reach these conclusions?

Apparently he is on the right line. By a careful study of chapters 1-3 similar to that of Herntrich, who, as we saw, was in turn dependent on Herrmann and Hölscher,[45] he undertakes to analyze out the original core of the account of Ezekiel's call. But from this point on his conduct is less exemplary. Obviously he brings into play many devices from the critic's repertoire, in particular the one which by this time he should be in a position to employ effectively, that of characteristic phrases and ideas. If Matthews is correct in his analysis of chapters 1-3, then he has attained precisely what the problem of Ezekiel most demands: he has a body of incontestably genuine material from which he may sample the quality of Ezekiel's mind, then push out with care into further analysis. But when he comes to apply this priceless result, immediately he throws away his gains. On pages xxvi, xxxviii, and xxxix he gives lists of phrases which he uses as an aid in identifying original material; he says that they are "favorite phrases of Ezekiel." But how does he know this? For the astonishing fact is that, of the eleven so recognized, only two occur in his supposedly original nucleus of chapters 1-3! And his authentication of the other nine, when with difficulty run to ground, turns out to be nothing but pure assumption or else arguing in a circle.

Another serious neglect of his hard-won gains hangs on the fact that he claims his nucleus of chapter 1 to be a poem of some extent. Now neither Isaiah nor Jeremiah, both of whom are freely recognized to have been great poets, recounted his initial experience in metric form.[46] If Ezekiel did so, surely he must have been not less given to poetic utterance than they. And while absurd things have been done and continue to be perpetrated in the use of poetic form as a critical tool, yet every student of the Old Testament realizes that with cautious and sane handling it can be an exceedingly valuable help. In Ezekiel it would supply just that sense of form and measure that we so sadly need to assist in details of differentiation of original from supplementary matter. But Matthews abandons all this likewise, without regret or explanation. As we have seen, he offers lip service to Hölscher's theory, but in his study of the text pays scant attention to it.[47] The result is what we might expect: much sage argument that in the end falls short of conviction. To illustrate and at the same time compare, we turn once more to chapter 6. Matthews is more generous than Cooke or Bertholet; he claims for Ezekiel verses 1-7 and 11-14. But why? To this there is no clear answer. With all the excellent features of his work, and they are many and high, in the end Matthews is only guessing. And the other two even more so!

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[44] Op. cit., p. xvii.

[45] A letter from Professor Matthews mentions that a large part of his work was done before Hölscher's book appeared. Re-working the problem, again he had completed his study before Herntrich's was published. "My results corresponded in a large measure with Herntrich. My final re-working was scarcely influenced by him."

And there we stand today. It is idle to remark that we have barely begun our task. At this moment the work of the prophet Ezekiel is cloaked in the darkest obscurity. No one at all has given us reason to believe that he knows what the prophet taught. His genuine utterances, in so far as preserved, are piled up heterogeneously in a confused mass along with secondary matter of which again no one shows any accurate knowledge of the nature or extent. Our first task, it is apparent, is to bring order out of this confusion. But we cannot do it by evolving a new set of guesses however plausible. What we must have is a new outfit of critical tools or a sharpening of the old ones. More specifically, we must discover reliable criteria that will enable us to distinguish with some reasonable approximation to finality between Ezekiel's own utterances and those of his disciples and followers. When that is done, the rest will be easy. Then we can summarize his teaching and evaluate his contribution to the life and growth of his people. Then, too, we can follow the alluring lead of the so-called "spurious" passages that beckon us to walk with them down no one knows how many centuries and look for brief moments into Jewish life perhaps in many lands and diverse conditions. That such criteria exist, hitherto largely overlooked notwithstanding the intensive discussion of the last nearly twenty years, is my firm conviction. To the search for them we now set ourselves, following an order of investigation dictated by the nature of the book.

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[46] Some scholars claim the existence of single poetic lines or brief poems in Isaiah, chap. 6, and Jeremiah, chap. 1.

[47] He speaks of poetry in chap. 7 but elsewhere recognizes it mainly in the passages commonly so assigned.

INDUCTION

I

CHAPTER 15

That this chapter falls into two clearly defined sections is apparent. Verses 1-5 contain the oracle; verses 6-8, its interpretation. The relation between these, apart from this obvious connection, is, however, not so clear. Hölscher took the position that the original oracle in poetic form is in verses 2-5; for the rest, the style with its threefold nathati is bad, the terminology is formal, and the method of the redactor is apparent: he has added an explanation of the parable, just as the Evangelists did for those of Jesus. But Hölscher has not succeeded in convincing later students of the chapter. Typical is the course taken by Matthews; he admits the spuriousness of verse 8 alone: it is an "addition with priestly phrasing." But Herntrich and Bertholet give more attention to Hölscher's arguments. The former finds occasion to object to the form of the poem which Hölscher succeeds in isolating but emphasizes still more Hölscher's failure to recognize that the chapter is an allegory, not a parable (whatever relevance this may have), and explains the different styles of the two sections on the grounds that verses 6-8 are a sort of colloquial interpretation given by the prophet when his auditors asked him the meaning of the allegory. On this ground, he believes, we are to understand many of the stylistically weak passages in the Book of Ezekiel. Bertholet objects to the view that the second section of the chapter is added by a redactor; likewise he claims that the divergence of the interpretation from the actual sense of the oracle is basically a supposition which cannot be accepted, because of "our judgment in similar cases." But, following his reference to these "similar cases," we find only the same categorical treatment; he merely comments that Hölscher's action is "methodisch sehr bedenklich."

It will be seen that, whatever the merits or shortcomings of Hölscher's position, his critics have been notoriously weak; they have argued about incidentals or nonessentials and for the real issue have given us ex cathedra decision rather than reasons.

If we now center attention for a moment on the oracle alone (vss. 2-5), it becomes apparent that its meaning and purport is that vine-wood is worthless in any case; still more, when a piece has been burned and scorched, is it out of the question to set any value on it. That is the plain statement of these few verses, about which there can be no dispute. But the next step is likewise clear. The vine is here, as commonly, a symbol for Judah. The author, whoever he may be, is stating that Judah never was of importance; how much more when it is "burned" (waiving for the moment the interpretation of this figure) is it negligible. But now we turn to the interpretation given in verses 6-8. That it identifies the vine with the people of Jerusalem is a minor issue; but to our astonishment we find it centering attention, not on the nature of the vine-wood, but on the fire which has burned this particular piece. The height of the emphasis is that, though this piece of wood has come out of fire, still fire will at length consume it, for the Lord has "set his face" against it. It is a thought completely diverse from its exemplar. This writer missed the main idea of the oracle that vine-wood is worthless; instead, he snatched at the figure of burning fire and so gave a totally diverse pronouncement. There is nothing in common between oracle and interpretation save their use of the symbols of vine-wood and fire. The interpretation is false.

In the light of these facts it becomes yet more apparent how trivial are the criticisms of Bertholet and Herntrich. Still, we must consider whether it is possible, notwithstanding its patent inconsistency, that the interpretation was written by the author of the oracle. Indeed, we must rather question whether verses 6-8 are actually interpretation at all and not, instead, an entirely independent oracle attached here because of superficial similarity.

When we recall the long history of collecting and editing the prophetic books, the brevity and sometimes fragmentary nature of many of the sources, and the obvious devices of the editors by which they strung these together into a seeming unity, it becomes highly plausible that here in chapter 15 we actually have two oracles, the latter of which has been given the appearance of an interpretation by some editor who connected the two through the particle לכן ("therefore"). But plausibility can be a very fallible guide. The explanatory character of these verses inheres also in כאשר ("just as") and in the remainder of verse 6a, patently an allusion, as it is, to the basic element in the oracle of verses 1-5. Then 6b must be included also, for it was certainly written for its present position. All that would remain for this postulated oracle would be verses 7-8. But these cannot be isolated from their context; verse 7 clearly depends on verse 6, and verse 8 follows naturally. The passage is a unit. And there is no escape from the conclusion that it is just what it appears to be—an interpretation of verses 1-5.

So, then, the issue clarifies itself into the question whether a writer could have so far mistaken his own meaning as to give a false commentary on his words. A categorical answer is out of the question when we recall the wide variety of mental peculiarities comprised within the total of human phenomena. Yet we would seem to be on safe ground in concluding, first, that a long interval must have separated oracle and interpretation, if by the one writer; second, an author would not readily forget his own meaning, still less an oriental author, in view of the retentiveness of the oriental memory; least of all, if we may generalize from Jeremiah's dictating his oracles after the lapse of years,[1] is it reasonable to suppose that a Hebrew prophet forgot the point of his utterance. And, finally, whatever residuum of possibility may yet cling to the suggestion dissipates when we realize that this is not an isolated occurrence in the Book of Ezekiel; rather we shall have occasion to remark the frequency of false commentary therein. It might perhaps be overlooked that even a Hebrew prophet should once have nodded into forgetfulness of his oracle of years before, but that he made a habit of it is too much for our credence. The unity of chapter 15 may be dismissed as out of reasonable consideration. It contains an oracle in verses 1-5 and a spurious interpretation in verses 6-8.[2]

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[1] Jeremiah, chap. 36.

Now, if we would be strictly inductive, we must admit that we know nothing as yet of the identity of either of these writers. There is nothing except the tradition that this is the Book of Ezekiel to indicate which, or in fact whether either, is the prophet Ezekiel. But we need not be pedantic. As the study of the book progresses, probability will harden into full certainty that verses 1-5 are the genuine utterance of the prophet Ezekiel. And on this prospective certitude we advance.

Here, then, is a fact of primary importance. We have thus isolated a genuine utterance of Ezekiel and as well a spurious passage of interpretation; here we have a basis on which to build certain conclusions as to Ezekiel's literary and mental characteristics and the nature and extent of their divergence from those of his interpreters. The evidence is all too meager as yet; it must be employed with caution, while we move on to discover still further features of the prophet's work. But, such as it is, we now possess that desideratum so sadly lacking in the study of the problem of Ezekiel: some dependable criteria of the genuine and the spurious.

But before we follow up this clue a preliminary step is demanded. Certainty is qualified by the ever present problem of text criticism. That there is some textual corruption in the oracle is suggested by the apparently conflate reading of verse 2 as well as by the divergence of LXX and the Vulgate. But, further, some scholars point out that verse 6 offers a variant reading, in this view stumbling all unwittingly over one of the major textual discoveries of the Book of Ezekiel. For a commentator, ancient or modern, normally follows the practice of quoting the passage on which he proposes to comment. In such citations we possess an invaluable source of textual evidence. How often the critic has wished devoutly to get back of the Septuagint and secure evidence of the Hebrew text at a period before the rise of the corruptions which the Greek translators found already existent. And here in the commentators' quotations in the Book of Ezekiel is the answer, in part, to his prayer; for that they preceded LXX is obvious in the fact that they are fully attested in it. Here is our earliest source of textual evidence—right in the Hebrew Bible itself. It is a source on which we shall have occasion to draw frequently as we progress. Sometimes its value is meager, no more than a word or two; again it attests most of a line. But, in any case, it is commonly of the highest importance in solving a textual, and hence critical or exegetical, problem.

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[2] It may have some value toward anticipating objections to point out that, while this result is identical with Hölscher's, the supporting considerations differ. Further, my position was reached in complete independence of him.

And so we turn to the text of the oracle. Verse 2 becomes at once lucid and straightforward if we accept the testimony of verse 6 that it contains a duplicate recension into which הזמורה ("the branch") was introduced as a sort of gloss. We have, then, three sources for this part-line; and they give us the three variants מכל־עץ ("more than any tree"), בעץ ("in the tree of"), and בעצי ("among the trees of"). LXX and the Vulgate differ mainly in a consistent use of the plural. On the whole, the weight of evidence and probability seems to favor מכל־עצי ("more than all the trees of"). But, further, the commentary is oblivious of the burning of the ends and the scorching of the middle. While this particular *argumentum e silentio* is peculiarly fallible, yet coinciding as it does with another line of evidence to be presented in a moment, we may regard it as somewhat cogent of the spurious origin of this phrase. Here we are to recognize the first occurrence of a feature that will become common, the additions of the expander, though frequently they are instead placed quite appropriately at the end of the oracle. A similar comment relates to the last words of verse 4. Probably, too, we are to read in verse 5, with LXX, Syriac, and Targum, היעשה ("is it used?") for ונעשה ("and it will be used"). And with this we may we satisfied that we have the oracle in something approximating its original form.

But now a remarkable fact emerges: this is poetry. The idea is not at all new, however; Hölscher had presented it, as well as Kraetschmar and Bertholet. But Bertholet in an excess of generosity undertakes to scan the entire chapter, right through to the prosy comments about knowing "that I am the Lord," and setting the land a desolation because of its wicked people. And Kraetschmar is almost as extreme. But the seeming poetic character of these verses is due merely to their citation of the real poetry of verses 2-5. All three critics include the burning and scorching of the ends and the middle (vs. 4). However, it is apparent that this statement, whatever its origin, is in itself a balanced parallelism; to divide it and make the first half parallel the general statement of the burning of the vine, and the second half the rhetorical question, seriously impairs, if not destroys, the poetic structure. It seems best, as suggested above, to ignore this line. And then we have a passage of six lines in 2:2, 3:2, and 3:3 measure. Indeed, though the strophic division is not so clear as might be wished, it may be held that the poem organizes into two triad[3] strophes, each beginning with 2:2 meter but merging over to 3:3 for the concluding line. The first strophe describes the low worth of vine-timber and the second the complete uselessness of this piece that has been partly burned; thus:

מה־יהיה עץ־הגפן   מכל־עצי היער
היקח ממנו עץ   לעשות למלאכה
אם־יקחו ממנו יתד   לתלות עליו כל־כלי

הנה לאש   נתן לאכלה
הנה בהיותו תמים   לא יעשה למלאכה
אף כי־אש אכלתהו ויחר   היעשה עוד למלאכה

How should vine-timber be better
  than any timber from the forest?
Does one take from it wood
  to use for any purpose,
or do (men) take from it a peg
  to hang anything thereon?

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[3] On the Hebrew strophe and the terminology employed relevant to it see C. F. Kraft, The Strophic Structure of Hebrew Poetry as Illustrated in the First Book of the Psalter (Chicago, 1938).

See, to the fire
it is given for fuel!
Behold, at its best
it was useful for nothing;
how much less when fire has burned it, and
it is charred,
can it yet be used for any purpose!

But it will be observed that the little poem makes no application of its conclusions. It briefly sketches a situation—and says nothing more. Yet no one would suppose that the author was interested primarily in the biological or economic fact that comprises the total of his presentation. That it has an application is beyond doubt; nor can one seriously question what that application is. There is here, then, teaching of the subtle, allusive sort which the Orient loves; it does not insult one's intelligence with crass statement but implies its meaning in a parable. Indeed, it will be well to recognize at once the happiness of Hölscher's identification of this as in a class with the parables of Jesus. Here, then, we discover one of the frequent and highly characteristic features of Ezekiel's work: he taught in parables. And, having discovered it for ourselves, the fact takes on new meaning that his contemporaries are represented as commenting that he uttered meshalim;[4] and twice his oracles are introduced by this same word.[5] But, further, it is desirable, even at the risk of tedious repetition, to add that we have found, as far as our brief investigation has taken us, that simple poetic structure in 2:2, 3:2, or 3:3 measure is characteristic of Ezekiel. And still one further feature deserves mention. We are to observe that the introductory formula is ויהי דבר יהוה אלי לאמר בן־אדם ("and the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man"). The introductions of prophetic oracles are of dubious origin. And in this case Hölscher is at pains to dispense with these words as editorial. But the formula will become extremely familiar as we go on—so familiar, indeed, that we may be pardoned for once again anticipating our results. It will be found that this phrase is so regular with genuine oracles that it becomes almost an index of original material somewhere in the immediately following verses. Rarely a genuine oracle occurs without this introduction; occasionally a doubtful passage has it; sometimes the introduction and its genuine utterance have become separated by later intrusions. But the normalcy of its genuine occurrence is so high as to leave no reasonable doubt that it comes direct from the hand of Ezekiel himself; it is his own stereotyped account of his religious experience and inspiration.

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[4] Ezek. 21:5.

[5] Ezek. 17:2; 24:3. The word occurs also in 14:8; 12:22f.; 16:44; and 18:2, but it will be apparent that it has here no relevance to the point in question.

Now a few words about the commentator, though generalizations in this case are still more precarious, for we shall see that there were a large number of them. But it is revealing to observe that a phrase, so familiar as to be an outstanding stylistic feature of the Book of Ezekiel, occurs in this chapter, but in the work of the commentator, that is, the words "you (elsewhere, either sing. or pl.; or, they) shall know that I am the Lord." We note, too, that the frequent phrase, "to set the land a *shmamah*," is also here spurious, and the particle יען ("because") and the verb and noun מעל ("to act treacherously") and the idea of the Lord's "setting his face against" someone. But more notable is the general tone and method of the commentary. It is homiletic; it undertakes to expound Ezekiel's oracle and apply it to the condition and conduct of, apparently, the commentator's contemporaries. The brief utterance of Ezekiel serves as a sort of text, from which the later writer formulates his short sermonette. But, in this case, the sermon has gone far beyond the original scripture in its severity. Ezekiel had merely said that his fellow-Jews were of no political importance, but this man declares the abiding wrath of God and the certainty of ultimate doom: "though they have escaped the fire, the fire will yet consume them." This sternness, though a remarkable aspect of these biblical homilies on Ezekiel's work, is by no means uniform. We shall discover writers and thinkers of a great gentleness and solicitude.

But the questions still remain of the time and place of utterance of the short oracle and its precise significance. The chapter will not determine a moot problem of recent criticism, whether Ezekiel worked in Palestine or in Babylonia. It is unquestionably concerned with conditions in Judah, but this does not preclude that the prophet, earnestly concerned with the character and welfare of his people as he was, should have uttered it in Babylonia. The older view which saw him warning and edifying his fellow-exiles with pictures of the badness and certain destruction of Jerusalem is intrinsically reasonable. If the issue entails no more than a repudiation of this consideration, then we shall do well to bow to tradition. In the present case we may observe merely that Ezekiel's familiarity with and absorption in the thinking and affairs of the Jerusalem community carries some probability that he was among them at this time. But we must wait to see whether conclusive evidence will arise.

In any case, the oracle in chapter 15 must have been uttered somewhat early in the reign of Zedekiah, for there is no hint of impending menace. But, further, its meaning points toward the same period. References to the burning of the vine, clearly the disaster of 597 B.C., suggests that this was recent. And the emphasis on the worthlessness of Judah, that is, quite clearly, its political and military insignificance in the ancient world, must have been evoked by public policies aiming at reasserting Judean independence if not reviving the fabled glories of the Davidic kingdom. This was the mood of the upstart officialdom which assumed power after their betters had been carried off in 597 B.C. Jeremiah, it is well known, denounced them in his oracle of the good and bad figs.[6] Ezekiel's mood and message are much the same as far as the residue in Jerusalem is concerned: they are but the charred remnants of vine-wood, which at the best never was of any value. While, true to the common practice of the Hebrew prophets, neither Jeremiah nor Ezekiel has left a specific mention of the other, it is clear from the situation disclosed in this chapter that the younger man knew and was influenced by his great contemporary.

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[6] Jeremiah, chap. 24.

II

CHAPTERS 4-5

It is long, and now generally, recognized that these chapters are to be treated together. That they contain genuine material is beyond dispute; but we observe that they are among the passages mentioned a little ago which, though from Ezekiel, are devoid of the introductory formula ויהי דבר יהוה אלי לאמר ("and the word of the Lord came to me, saying"). Again we are indebted to Hölscher for illuminating treatment. He found a poem of three strophes, each introduced with the address ואתה בן־אדם ("and you, son of man"), and contained roughly in 4:1-2 and 9-10 and 5:1-2. The repetition of address, the similarity of form, and the unity of theme throughout the three sections place it beyond dispute that his view is essentially correct. There remain serious problems, however; for here is a passage where the frequent gibe at the quality of Hölscher's poetry is cogent.

Attention has long been attracted to the evident intrusion of 4:4-8 into the chapter; it gives a symbol of exile, not of siege, as do the sections just now mentioned. Various devices are followed by exegetes to deal with this situation. Bertholet frankly accepts the verses in their present position as the second of a series of five symbolic acts. Matthews comes somewhat cautiously to agreement with Herrmann that the section is from the later years of Ezekiel's activity and belongs to the same period as chapter 37. Cooke likewise regards it as genuine but would connect with 3:25-26. But Herntrich supports Hölscher's view that we have to do here with an Exilic addition. One thing we may conclude: the section does not belong with the three "strophes" describing the siege; if it is Ezekiel's, it is intruded here out of context. We possess as yet too meager criteria of Ezekiel's style and thinking to decide now the question of its genuineness; but, since the passage is of too slight critical consequence to merit returning later, we may dismiss it at once with the remark that it lacks all marks of the prophet's hand as this will later become familiar to us. Apparently it came into the chapter as a sort of gloss on verse 3. If Ezekiel was carrying on a mimic siege of a city hidden behind a mere kitchen pan, he must have been lying prone. Then out of this lying came the idea, perhaps, as Matthews suggests, as part of the great concept of vicarious suffering that became significant through Exilic and later times, that thus he was bearing the sin of the two houses of Israel.

Verses 16-17 of chapter 4 also demand attention. It will be seen that they have the now-familiar address ben-'adam; moreover, they are appropriate to the theme of verses 9-10, being likewise from the time of the siege and, just as the other verses, warning of approaching destitution. And too, they scan, or are so close to acceptable scansion that the view may not be neglected that they represent an original poetic utterance of the prophet. But the close similarity to 12:17-19, which, as we shall see, has all the marks of genuineness, leaves it highly probable that here in chapter 4 we have to do with out first case of duplicate recension, a view corroborated by the consideration that the regularity of the three sections of chapters 4-5 as mentioned above militates heavily against the intrusion of a heterogeneous passage such as this. Its presence at this point, however, throws light on the process through which the Book of Ezekiel was edited. But we ignore it for the present, to take it up in its proper place in our study of chapter 12. The balance of these two chapters beyond the verses listed above is clearly spurious: of this we shall adduce cogent evidence shortly. And so we center attention first on 4:1-3 and 9-10 and 5:1-3.

It will be convenient to turn first to 4:9-10. The clear purport of this section of the oracle is the prospective reduction of Jerusalem to siege rations. This is so obvious from mention of eating by weight and drinking by measure, apart from the quantities so prescribed, that argument would be superfluous. But then we run immediately into difficulty; for if the garrison had at the time prefigured the diverse supply of grain mentioned in verse 9, its situation was far from desperate. But it is an odd fact that verse 12, though spurious, as we shall see in a moment, instructs the prophet to eat the barley cakes made from this mixture![1] Then the light dawns upon us. Here, again, we profit by the textual evidence of the commentator; when this man read the passage, it mentioned only barley. And barley was, like oats in Samuel Johnson's famous definition, food for donkeys and peasants. Here, then, is the point of the passage: the garrison would be reduced to a ration of barley and not enough of that. There can be no doubt that the other five grains of verse 9 go out; they are the work of the "cataloguing" expander, from whom we shall see much in the Book of Ezekiel; and similar features are familiar in other books of the Old Testament. And this disposes of the first of the Aramaic forms so famous in this book—the word חטין ("wheat"). It is not from Ezekiel at all. But this deletion of the five grains carries the further implication that אותם ("them"), occurring twice in the immediate sequel, must go also. It is possible, though not at all probable, that שערים ("barley") would employ this plural reference; it is best to delete. A question may then be raised about אחד ("one"); it may seem the point of the passage was that all these mixed grains were put into one vessel. And, indeed, the commentators, both ancient and modern, have so understood it. Yet we may be content to let the word stand. Two considerations are relevant. It is frequently no more than an indefinite article; but also Ezekiel may have been emphasizing the thought that the available barley ration would be so small that it could readily be put into one vessel.

It is commonly recognized that 9b is a harmonistic intrusion. But verse 10 raises more serious difficulties. Apparently we should, with the support of LXX, dispose of the relative clause and then read מאכלך תאכל במשקול ("your food you shall eat by weight"); the present text is defensible, but its awkwardness inclines us heavily toward this emendation. But, now, what of the eating from time to time and similar drinking (in vs. 11)? Is it not sufficient that we are told of the scarcity of these essentials? What point that they should be used "from time to time"? The consideration is greatly enhanced by the structure which emerges when it is followed. We must be on guard against a loose and uncritical application of poetic form as a criterion of text criticism. Yet the Hebrew poets had a clear and well-defined sense of form and were much more regular in its application than some would admit. We are remiss to our task if we fail to employ this evidence sanely and cautiously. In the present case the poem which presently emerges is of such distinctive form and regularity that we may feel some little confidence in our results, when supported as they are by other lines of evidence.

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[1] The difficulty was recognized by ancient Jewish scholars (see Midrash Rabba: Leviticus, translated under the editorship of Rabbi Dr. H. Freedman and Dr. Maurice Simon [1939], p. 365: "R. Hama b R. Halafta explained [sc. the difficulty of calling the mixture barley bread] that he put in a large proportion of barley").

Hölscher was right; the oracle in chapters 4-5 is poetic. And this conclusion gives us a fresh criterion to apply to verse 12, which is crass prose. This section of the oracle, beyond any question, terminates with verse 11. Indeed, we can now make use of the consideration which was determinative in our study of chapter 15, for verse 12 introduces another glaring case of false exegesis. It runs off into the idea of the ritual uncleanness of this mixed diet. But first a comment on the structure of the verse: we have noted the importance of 12*a* for textual evidence; it was added when nothing but שערים ("barley") stood in the text of the oracle. But modern exegetes are correct in seeing in the uncleanness of the food, made so clear in verse 13, an allusion to Levitical dietary restrictions; consequently, this notion came into the passage after the several grains had been introduced into verse 9. The awkward structure of verse 12 must also be observed. Then the clue to the situation forces itself on us; the verse is itself composite. Only 12*a* was introduced by the expanding commentator; then much later, and, as we have seen, after the text of verse 9 also had been enlarged by the cataloguing commentator, 12*b* ff. came into the text. The false exegesis of the passage will now be apparent. The ritual uncleanness of the mixed diet is remote from the thought of the original oracle, which dealt only with the scarcity of food in the besieged city. And this fact carries an implicit condemnation of verse 14, which might otherwise make some initial appeal for acceptance as a genuine comment of the prophet himself.

So the oracle, in this section, emerges in the following form:

ואתה קח־לך שערים   ונתתה בכלי אחד   ועשית לך ללחם
ומאכלך תאכל במשקול   עשרים שקל ליום   ומים במשורה תשתה

Take you barley,
put it in one vessel
and make bread for yourself.
Your food you shall eat by weight,
twenty shekels a day,
and water you shall drink by measure.

It is a couplet of tristich lines. That they are tristichs is apparent from the fact that the third stichos is a parallel not of the fourth but of the first and second; similarly the fourth clearly goes with the following.[2]

Now, does the next section of the oracle, chapter 5, verses 1 ff., fall naturally and obviously into a similar form? It is apparent that it also has been subjected to expansion and glossing. The mathematical absurdity of verses 3-4 is apparent; after three-thirds of the hair has been disposed of, there yet remains considerable! The reading *τὸ τεταρτον* in LXX is certainly not a true variant but merely the effort of these ancient translators to remove this nonsense. The oracle is contained in verses 1-2 only. But in verse 1 the barber's razor is a glass. In verse 2 the mention of the completion of the siege is commonly recognized to be a harmonistic device similar to that in 9b, perhaps by the same man; and likewise the drawing-out of the sword after the dispersed hairs is admittedly editorial. The result then is:

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[2] It is freely admitted that exact identification of the second line, in particular the last stichos, is uncertain. ששית ההין would prove an attractive parallel to the twenty shekels of barley; but it is metrically difficult. On the other hand, משורה is a rare word of dubious etymology; its similarity to the Latin mensura has since medieval times given rise to suspicion of relationship. But probably this is no more than folk etymology. Weighing all considerations, the result given above seems best.

ואתה קח־לך חרב   והעברת על־ראשך ועל־זקנך   ולקחת מאזני משקל וחלקתם
שלשית באור תבעיר   השלשית תכה בחרב   והשלשית תזרה לרוח

Take you a sharp sword,
  pass it over your head and beard,
  and take scales and divide the hair.
A third you shall burn in the fire,
  a third you shall strike with the sword,
  and a third you shall scatter to the wind.

In the third stichos מאזני משקל ("scales") is to be regarded as a single metrical beat. And then it is highly interesting to see that we have isolated the same form as in 4:9-10, a tristich couplet.

The first section of the poem is the most difficult for the critic, however. But at least it is certain that we may describe it as poetic, for, with the deletion of את־ירושלם ("Jerusalem") from verse 1, which most critics admit to be a gloss, the passage scans through verses 1-2 with perfect regularity, if we agree with the Massoretes that שים עליה ("set against it") is to be taken as one beat.[3] But verse 3 at once reveals itself as unlike the form of its context, and as we proceed we find it to be crass prose. Hölscher is right; it is but a crude copy of the style and, in part, of the content of verses 1-2. Here, again, is the hand of the expander.[4] But now it is clear that verses 1-2 divide between the first and second stichoi of verse 2; the preceding material has dealt with instructions for portraying a city in siege; but the following describe the details of the mimic operations. Yet these parts are each of four stichoi, not three, as we might have expected. But Hebrew poetry does not know a line of four stichoi. And to divide the second group of four into two distich lines is purely arbitrary; there is no such natural division. But as well we note the tedious repetition of ונתתה ("and you shall place"); further, in the details of the mimic siege it is excessive to be told to place a camp against the city; surely this is implied already in the active engineering measures taken to bring it into siege. And similarly, in the first part, it was unnecessary that the poet be instructed to place the brick before himself; how else could he have pictured a city upon it and then laid siege? It is a fair suspicion that the two verses have received some accretion. And the needs of the case will be met if we consider the original to have been approximately the following:

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[3] Though we are probably to read with LXX merely ושמת.

[4] There is no thought of implying that the "expander" or the "commentator" or any other was one and the same individual throughout. On the contrary, there is every reason to believe that many hands have operated here. We turn to this problem later.

ואתה קח־לך לבנה   וחקות עליה עיר   ונתתה עליה מצור
ובנית עליה דיק   ושפכת עליה סללה   ושמת כרים סביב

Take you a brick,
  map a city on it,
  then lay siege to it.
Build siege-works against it,
  heap up a mound against it
  and set rams round about.

Such cogency as these critical considerations may in themselves possess is enhanced by the identity of structure that thus emerges. It is evident that this oracle was originally a poem of three strophes, each a tristich couplet.

But, just as chapter 15, the oracle was given no original interpretation. The imagery employed, in this case apparently dramatic as well as literary, was regarded as sufficient to carry the prophet's meaning. And so it was. There can be no mistaking his thought. Here he warns the people of Jerusalem that the siege will become increasingly stringent, with progressive privations down to a bare subsistence level and below. But, even so, their efforts will be unavailing; the city will be taken, and its population destroyed. One-third will die of famine and its concomitants in the siege, a third will be killed by the enemy, and the rest will go into captivity. The exact time of utterance of the oracle is not clear. The first strophe might imply that the city is not yet beleaguered, and the prophet is warning of the fatal course being taken by Judah's leaders, which will lead on through the progressive evils here portrayed. On the whole, it is most probable, however, that the Babylonians are already around the walls; indeed, that matters have by this time become somewhat serious. Then, in the first strophe the prophet is merely depicting the contemporary background of his warnings to be presented in the second and third. It is to be noted that no explanation is offered of the disaster which is to come; this also is a part of the allusive, parabolic character of Ezekiel's poetry, as far as we have yet had opportunity to study it.

The probability is higher here than in chapter 15 that the prophet was in Jerusalem at the time of utterance. The anactment of this mimic drama has an air of unreality if we are to locate it among the Babylonian exiles. And this stands out the more clearly when the poem is stripped of its accretions. But, while a "cumulative argument" has validity, we do well to hold judgment still in abeyance, hoping for evidence of a different sort.

The spurious material in chapter 5 has not yet been examined. That it is spurious is attested by the fact that it is prose. Certainly this alone would not be conclusive. It is always possible that a poet should append a prose interpretation to his metrical productions. But there is not much value in debating the plausibility of this; the crucial concern is whether this poet actually did so in the present case. In other words, are there considerations to support the presumption raised by the difference of form?

The answer is not simple, for the section is highly composite; the problem then reduces to the issue whether any of verses 3-17 are genuine. We are compelled to undertake an analysis; and immediately we are struck by the wealth of introductory and concluding formulas. Thus, as introductory, we find כה אמר אדני יהוה ("thus says the Lord") (vs. 5), לכן כה אמר אדני יהוה ("therefore thus says the Lord") (vss. 7, 8), לכן ("therefore") (vss. 10, 11), יען ("because") (vss. 9, 11), and נאם אדני יהוה ("the oracle of the Lord") (vs. 11) properly a concluding formula but here used for introduction. And, as a conclusion, אני יהוה דברתי ("I, the Lord, have spoken") occurs in verses 13, 15, and 17, though in the former it is probably a conflation of an earlier וידעו כי אני יהוה ("and they shall know that I am the Lord"). Now several of these phrases would, in other prophetic books, be normally understood as introducing separate and additional oracles. And we must weigh the possibility that they actually do so here. But the issue is of slight difficulty, for in some cases the material so introduced is patently interpretative of the poetic oracle in verses 1-2, and in others this is its most obvious meaning. In other words, the chapter is not a series of oracles on different themes but is close knit about the subject matter of its opening verses. However, this co-ordination does not at all show unity, for in reality most, if not all, of these phrases are significant of the independent origin of their sections. Thus verses 5-6 are a complete exposition in themselves, independent of all the rest; verse 7 is logically incomplete and for sense demands that the introduction in verse 8 be taken as a rhetorical repetition. This may be correct, but the view is not unreasonable that the verse is a fragment. The phraseology of verse 13b certainly indicates an original conclusion, for the evils threatened in verse 14 are evidently to come upon the Palestinian Jews; they shall thus become a reproach in the eyes of the nations "round about them," not "among whom they are" as would be the situation of the only survivors admitted in verse 13. Then 15 is a pale repetition of 14, with allusions to phrases earlier in the chapter. And 16-17 are another interpretation of the original oracle, differing in a significant way from the excellent exegesis in verse 12. We are driven, then, to recognize the following sections: verses 3-4, 5-6, 7-9 (or, more probably, 7, 8-9), 10, 11-13, 14, 15, and 16-17.

Enough has been said already about the first of these. But verses 5-6 provide that ethical explanation of the threatened disasters which we have noted the poetic oracle lacks. Similarly verses 11-13 are also an explanation but differing from that of verses 5-6, though if one is argumentative he may hold that the content of 11 is implied in 5-6; however, they give an almost accurate interpretation of the oracle. Two considerations, however, reveal their spurious origin;

they have one-third of the population die by the sword "round about you," which certainly is not true of the historic situation where these people were slain on the walls or actually within the city when captured; further it is not true to Ezekiel's thought. This commentator has evidently misunderstood the relevance of סביבותיה ("around it") in verse 2. And the other consideration is the small matter of the insertion of כל ("every") with רוח ("wind") in regard to the scattering of the remaining third. It is very slight evidence but indicates an origin in the Diaspora, to which we have many references in the book, as will soon appear. Verse 14 is our first introduction to the commentator who likes to point the shame of the exiled Jews among the nations, the "shamed" commentator, we shall call him; verse 15 is commentary on this, with allusion to other phraseology of the commentators in verses 8 and 13. Verses 16-17 resemble 11-13 in their systematic interpretation of the symbols of verses 1-2. It is to be noted, however, that the scattering is omitted; instead, the commentator gives an expanded interpretation of the burning of the hair. He is obviously correct in explaining this as famine and pestilence; but, to our astonishment, he adds wild beasts, giving us thereby a clue to his time and situation and as well providing another clear case of false exegesis. Imagine wild beasts ravaging Jerusalem while it was shut up in siege and closely ringed about by the Babylonian army! The interpreter has missed the point completely; he does not think of the disaster of Ezekiel's time but in more general terms talks of hardships suffered by the Jewish people in their normal life in Palestine. But to his credit is the fact that as against verse 12 he has correctly understood the symbol of the sword. Then, reverting to verse 10: it is brief but a complete exposition. Instead of famine and disease, it interprets the burning as referring to the cannibalism which broke out under the terrible stress of siege conditions.[5] We may concede that this could be included under the symbol; but it was certainly not Ezekiel's thought. It is divergent, if not actually false, exegesis. Clearly we have here not prophecy, as is the oracle, but vaticinium ex eventu. Then the smiting with the sword is interpreted in the general terms, "I will do judgments"; the scattering to the wind is merely carried over but, as in verse 12, with the significant insertion of כל.

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[5] Cf. Lev. 26:29 and my article, "An Objective Criterion for the Dating of Deuteronomy," AJSL, LVI (1939), 337-49.

So the only part of verses 3-17 which merits consideration as genuine is verses 5-6. Yet its care to explain that the symbol concerned Jerusalem is unlike what we saw of Ezekiel's method in chapter 15 and as well its use of the strange idea of the geographic centrality of the city leaves us very suspicious. And this uneasiness is aggravated by its charge that the badness of the Jews surpassed the iniquities of their neighbor-nations, a notion which we shall presently find as the commentator's. Further, we shall meet in due course a case of certainly genuine interpretation and shall then recognize how different it is from this. There remains, then, no reasonable doubt that the genuine material in chapters 4-5 is limited to the three poetic strophes isolated above and the duplicate passage in 4:16-17. However, the commentary in verses 5-6 must have been appended early. While its thought is appropriate to verses 1-2, yet no one would naturally think of explaining these with the note, "This is Jerusalem." Clearly this refers not to this final strophe but to the poem as a whole and then must have been added before its unity was obscured by the accretions now present. It seems practically certain that it preceded the insertion of 4:4-8 and its relevant glosses; and it is a safe assumption that 4:12-15 also was later.

Little more need be said. It is of value to emphasize the spurious character of the formulas discussed above; we note, too, the occurrence of the words שקוצים ("detestable things") and תועבות ("abominations") (vs. 11), the phrase, "My eye will not pity, and I will not spare" (vs. 11), the drawing-out of a sword (vss. 2, 12), and "to every wind" (vss. 10, 12). One should note also the presence of expansive additions; these precede the commentary in place and perhaps actually did so in time; certainly some of the exegetic material is later, for it refers to them. Then, too, a striking fact is how the commentary is pyramided, comment upon comment. We shall yet see even more notable cases of this.

III

CHAPTER 6

For Hölscher this chapter is "rhetorische Prosa" and entirely spurious. But later studies are more conservative. The following subdivision is obvious: verses 1-7, 8-10, and 11-14. There is general agreement that the second of these sections is not Ezekiel's.

The chapter begins with the typical formula in verse 1. The continuation of the introduction in verses 2-3 seems heavy, but several parallels will presently appear. There is no basis for doubting its originality, except that לגבעות לאפיקים ולגיאות ("to the hills, to the ravines, and to the valleys") in 3b is an intrusion, as evidenced by verses 2 and 3a. An important critical point is the omission of 5a by LXX. Further, this is but a trite repetition of 4b; beyond doubt it is to be ignored. Verse 7a is likewise repetitious; and 7b is the phrase which we found in chapter 15 to be spurious; we can afford to be suspicious of it here. Leaving verse 6 in uncertainty for the moment, we find the following structure:

הנני מביא עליכם חרב   ואבדתי במותיכם
ונשמו מזבחותיכם   ונשברו חמניכם

והפלתי חלליכם   לפני גלוליכם
וזריתי את־עצמותיכם   סביבות מזבחותיכם

Behold, I am bringing upon you a sword
  and I will destroy your high places.
Your altars shall be desolate
  and your incense altars broken.

And I will throw down your slain
  before your hateful idols
And will scatter your bones
  round about your altars.

That is, once again the original oracle falls into poetic form. Apparently the first stichos must be considered to be of three beats, but the rest are of two. The poem falls into two couplets; the first (through 4a) deals with the destruction of the cultic paraphernalia, the second with the slaughter around the altars. But, unlike the two oracles studied hitherto, this is not a parable or a drama. Still it has the same light touch, for it leaves unstated the reasons for the predicted destruction. But, as elsewhere, Ezekiel is quite clear. This is a denunciation of the pagan cults and immoral practices on the "mountains of Israel." Since the coming of the sword is future, the oracle was evidently pronounced before the invasion in 588 B.C. Its place of utterance can be determined only on the grounds invoked already, though one comes to feel that the picture of Ezekiel thus threatening Palestinian practices while himself in the different conditions of far-off Babylonia is improbable.

Conceivably verse 6 might be forced into metrical form and hence perhaps appended to the poem. But mention of the desolation of cities is false to the context; and this is the only new content in the verse, which otherwise repeats the ideas and largely the words of 3b-5. Its contrast to the neat, compact poem isolated in 3-5 demonstrates cogently its spuriousness. Verses 7-10 are crass prose. The prevalent view that they are editorial is abundantly supported. But all this later material is interesting and valuable. It attests richly the wording of the oracle. And in 8 ff. the "shamed" commentator gives one of his clearest expositions. He is in the Diaspora; the remnant escaped from the sword is scattered among the nations and lands. His vicarious shame for his people's idolatrous immoralities carries some implication of the persistence of these practices into his time; but more clearly it reveals the rise of a Jewish conscience against them. The disaster to the nation is still a religious problem; the commentator is in the succession of the great prophets when he finds the answer in the moral demands of a righteous God (vs. 10).

In verse 11 it is apparent that after the introduction the passage is a 2:2:2 line as far as אח ("alas!"). The rest of the verse is of uncertain meter; in fact, much of it must be spurious. The relative clause in b anticipates the certainly original details of the approaching death related in verse 12; as well, we shall see in a moment that its inclusion results in an anomalous strophic structure. We must disregard it. And its absence immediately clears the metrical problem; we have remaining a 2:2 line. Then, since רעות ("evil") in 11 is not supported by LXX, והנשאר ("and he who is left") in 12 is obviously a corrupt dittograph of והנצור ("and he who is besieged"), and the second ימות ("shall die") should, with LXX, be read יתם ("shall come to an end"), the following results:

הכה בכפך   ורקע ברגלך   ואמר אח
אל כל־תועבות   בית ישראל

הרחוק בדבר ימות   והקרוב בחרב יפל
והנצור ברעב יתם   וכליתי חמתי בם

Strike with your hand
  and stamp with your foot
  and say, Alas
for all the abominations
  of the House of Israel!

He who is afar, by pestilence shall die;
  he who is near, by the sword shall fall;
he who is besieged, by famine shall end:
  so I will expend my rage upon them.

The poem, it is obvious, is thus in predominant 3:3 measure, but varied with 2:2:2 and apparently 2:2. Probably we are to regard it as falling into two couplets, the first announcing the lamentation, and the second the approaching death that is its occasion.

The introductory formula in verse 11 is disturbing; it is but a fragment of the usual introduction. But we cannot on this ground ignore the presence of an original oracle, for many things could have happened to the formula in transmission, and its deficiency in chapters 4-5 is fresh in mind. Still it must be noted as one occurrence of the present phrase with genuine material. That the oracle goes no further than verse 12 will call for no argument; the rest is prose, employs the commentator's phrases וידעתם כי אני יהוה ("and you shall know that I am the Lord") and ונתתי את־הארץ שממה ("and I will set the land a desolation"), and further its character as commentary is patent in its repetition and expansion of the wording of verses 1-4. It is an interesting fact, however, that the section does not comment on verses 11-12, to which it is immediately attached, but on the previous poem.

Now it is apparent that נצור ("kept") (vs. 12) is to be read נָצוֹר ("besieged"); then the situation becomes clear. This oracle is from the time of the siege. The "near" can be none other than the Jews of Judah, for they are to die by the sword, i.e., of Nebuchadrezzar; and the "far" are those in captivity in Babylonia. So at last we have certain evidence. Ezekiel was in Palestine at the time the city was besieged. The features of this passage, especially when taken in connection with the cumulative evidence of which already we have seen a small part, renders it unnecessary to give more attention to this aspect of our problem; save only we may note that chapter 7, to which we shall come shortly, when it is understood demonstrates conclusively that it could have been written nowhere but in Jerusalem. Beyond a question Ezekiel began his prophetic ministry in Palestine.[1] The task lies yet before us to accumulate such evidence as exists on the question of whether he ever went to Babylonia and, if so, when and how.

But such dating precludes attaching this oracle to verses 3-4 as further strophes in that poem. It was written apparently some few years later. Its presence in this chapter is evidently editorial and due to its common threat of the slaughter of the people. And the fact just now noted, that verses 13-14 are commentary on verses 1-4, shows what has happened. Some editor inserted this genuine oracle in its present position, separating what are now verses 10 and 13 to do so, in the belief that thus he had found its appropriate place. An enticing question is where he found the brief fragment. But on this we have no light.

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[1] Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, VI (1939), 411 cites the Mekilta to Exod. 12:1*b*, "where it is stated that prophecy is a prerogative of the Holy Land, and though it is true that Ezekiel and Jeremiah prophesied in other countries, their career was begun in the Holy Land." See J. Z. Lauterbach (ed.), *The Mekilta* (1933), p. 54. Cf. too the Targum of Ezek. 1:3, "The prophetic message came from God to Ezekiel the son of Buzi the priest in the land of Israel; again he spoke to him in a province of the land of the Chaldeans by the River Kebar." See too Rashi's comment on Baba Bathra 15*a*.

IV

CHAPTER 36

That this chapter contains the logical counterpoise and balance of chapter 6 is recognized by all. Indeed, the first verses declare it unmistakably, for here is the same address to the mountains of Israel, which then is followed, not as in chapter 6 by a threat, but by comfort and promise of restoration. All recent commentators believe a genuine oracle is present though overlaid with later accretions; but the chaos of present results in the study of Ezekiel is well illustrated by the divergence of identification of this original.

It is generally recognized, also, that the chapter falls naturally into two sections: (a) verses 1-15 and (b) verses 16-38. But further analysis is desirable, indeed necessary, for both these are composite. The succession of introductory formulas in (a), just as in chapter 5, raises the question of how far they are to be accepted as indicating separate utterances. At the very least we must recognize that 7-12 and 13-15 stand by themselves. Moreover, verses 1-6 are so redundant and of such trifling content that it is best to consider them merely a series of brief, separate comments.

But when we come to look for the genuine material in this section, notwithstanding the generous concession of Hölscher, we are baffled by its strangeness to everything that we have as yet seen to be characteristic of Ezekiel. We lack the typical introduction: not a crucial deficiency in itself but significant; and soon we encounter יען ("because"), which hitherto has been typical of the commentator, never of Ezekiel. And there follows a succession of לכן ("therefore") and לכן כה אמר יהוה ("therefore thus says the Lord") or simply כה אמר יהוה ("thus says the Lord"). It is highly disturbing; but still we must face the possibility that, even under such handicap, Ezekiel did succeed in getting something into these verses. But where is it? There is nothing that will readily fall into the poetic form now recognized as Ezekiel's, nothing of his typical light, allusive touch, not an idea characteristic of his thinking so far familiar to us. But, on the contrary, verse after verse screams out to high heaven its origin in the mind and hand of one or another of the commentators. The relation and similarity to chapter 6 so commonly remarked is simple: this is but characteristic commentary on both genuine and spurious elements in the earlier chapter, quoting phrase after phrase on which to hang its homilies. But, to crown it all, if further evidence were necessary, it is false commentary. Chapter 6 was only superficially an oracle against the mountains; we saw that its theme was really the pagan worship carried on there and the paraphernalia of the immoral cult. If these writers had really understood the passage to which they wished to provide a counterpoise, they should rather have promised that the hills of Israel should become "Holiness to the Lord," and "from one new moon to another men should go up from them to worship the Lord in Jerusalem." Instead, they have been misled by the spurious mention of the desolation of cities (6:6) into supposing this to be the emphasis of the chapter; and so they reprove the nations who scoffed at the disaster of 586 B.C. and promise fruitfulness for the hills of Palestine. So there the matter rests. There is not a word in the section that need be seriously considered Ezekiel's, save where the commentators have quoted from him for their homiletic purpose. The presence of this commentary at just this point in the book, instead of being appended immediately to chapter 6, is deserving of note. Whether or not we can discern the total implication of this, at least we must see that some systematic, logical editor inserted it here for the sake of its significance in the plan of the book. And by this means he misled centuries of exegetes into believing this to be a mark of Ezekiel's logical mind that thus arranged his book with promise counterpoised to long previous threat.

But now an interesting fact emerges; verses 7-12 must surely come from the period immediately before Nehemiah's great work. The promise of the rebuilding of the cities and the repopulation of the land, together with its restored fertility, is strongly reminiscent of that time of extreme depression and discouragement in Judah. We recognize parallels to the thought of Haggai and of Zechariah as well as relationships to certain poems of "Third Isaiah." Just how early in this period from 586 to 444 B.C. we may place the passage is not clear. But it is valuable as evidence of the somewhat early vogue of commentary on Ezekiel's oracles. Perhaps we may take a further, though very hesitant, step. We shall see considerable evidence as we go on that the composition of the chapters in this book is commonly chronological. It would be most natural that a commentator should append his remarks at the end of the chapter rather than insert them into the body of it; but the actual evidence will be found to be better than this. If, then, we may suppose that some such chronological order was followed in the development of this chapter 36, we are driven to put verses 1-6 in time before 7-12, and thus apparently *relatively* soon after the disaster of 586 B.C., though obviously one will beware of the effort to translate the phrase "relatively soon" into mathematical terms. So, then, the resentment here voiced against the neighbor-nations for their satisfaction in the fall of Jerusalem would appear to be an actual mood of the time when the Jews were still staggering under the blow. It is a line of thought that may promise far-reaching implications in Old Testament criticism.

Verses 13-14 are interesting also for their evidence of an ancient charge against Palestine as a land that devoured its inhabitants. This too would seem to come from the same time of depression as verses 7-11; and the reference to contempt of the nations ties it up close, as well, with 1-6. It is deserving of note also that the familiar phrase about knowing "that I am the Lord" is used in verse 11 as the climax of a promise, not a bitter threat as is usual.

The second section of the chapter offers better prospect of original material, for here at the outset is the genuine introduction in full and indubitable form. Further, our expectations are quickened by the following words, for they scan as a good 3:3 line. Verse 17*b* (with ובעלילותם ["and with their wicked doings"] also) is patently a commentator's explanation; all of 18 except the first three words is likewise; if one refuses to be convinced by its character, the evidence of LXX will probably be conclusive. Then this result emerges:

בית ישראל ישבים על־אדמתם   ויטמאו אותה בדרכם   ואשפך חמתי בם

When the House of Israel were living in their land,
  they defiled it with their way;
  so I poured out my wrath on them.

It is possible to find metrical form even beyond this point. But the first clause of 19 is so clearly balanced by the second that we are not justified in tearing it away merely to force it into a poetic structure. Further, its language is typical of a commentator in the Diaspora and is inappropriate to the days of Ezekiel. In verses 20 and 21 also one could find or make lines that would scan; but the method would be that of the older metrical criticism. It is best to stop with the tristich line given above. What has just been said about verse 19 will suffice for 20-21, which are in the same mood and style. They are entirely the work of the expander. The oracle, then, is limited to the one tristich line. Its brevity and light touch are features which have become familiar by this time. A date is difficult to fix, save that it should apparently be put some time after the final collapse of the nation. Unfortunately, there is no evidence as to Ezekiel's location at the time. It is a brief note of historical explanation which we are to regard, not so much as retrospective musing as rather the prophet's answer to the perplexed and despairing mood of his compatriots, disturbed that the Lord should have permitted them to suffer at the hands of cruel foes. It was a problem already old in Judah's religious history, uppermost as it was in the days of Isaiah, and later inspiring classic formulation by Habakkuk. Equally it remained long a concern of Jewish faith, as, indeed, this very Book of Ezekiel fully attests. Even in the immediate context within this chapter we find late homiletic theologizing suggested by the genuine oracle but evidently nonetheless intended to meet religious perplexities of the writer's contemporaries.

At verse 22 we move into a new section, as is evident from the fresh introduction and from the redundant expansion of the preceding verses. But now we come to one of the astonishing facts in the criticism of the Book of Ezekiel. In the Greek papyrus No. 967 the chapter terminates with verse 23*a*.[1] The full significance of this is not realized until we understand that, long before the discovery of No. 967, Thackeray had observed how distinct the Greek of this passage is from all else in Ezekiel and had concluded that it is an independent fragment which came into its present place perhaps from some Jewish or even Christian lectionary.[2] This convergence of two cogent lines of evidence establishes conclusively that the passage was not in the Hebrew text at the time of its translation into Greek.[3] It is possible that it had not been inserted even by the time that No. 967 was copied, that is, early in the third century A.D.[4] But the evidence does not at all demand this. It is best to date it loosely within the period from the translation of LXX to the copying of No. 967, or, in objective terms, roughly from some time in the latter half of the second century B.C. to the early part of the third A.D.[5] Evidently the critical dogma that the prophetic canon was closed by 200 B.C. demands serious reconsideration, though perhaps it will still

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[1] A. C. Johnson, H. S. Gehman, and E. H. Kase, *The John H. Scheide Biblical Papyri: Ezekiel* (Princeton, 1938), p. 176; cf. pp. 8-11 and 37; cf. also F. W. Beare in *Chronique d'Egypte*, XIII (1938), 389.

[2] H. St.J. Thackeray, *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek* (Cambridge, 1909), pp. 11-12.

[3] Kenyon (*JTS*, XXXIX [1938], 276) says of the omission that "the exact explanation is not clear. It looks, however, as though either it were not in the original LXX, or a version of it, current earlier in liturgical use, had been incorporated by the translators of the LXX. The latter explanation seems *a priori* more probable." Unfortunately, this is obscure for, if it means what it says, the alternative favored fails to take account of the fact under discussion that the section is not in our earliest copy of LXX. We must then rest content with the fact that Kenyon presents as one of his two favored theories the view that the section was not in the original LXX. Recently Floyd V. Filson has argued that the omission is to be explained very simply on the basis of homoioteleuton ("The Omission of Ezek. 12:26-28 and 36-23b-38 in Codex 967," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXII [1943], 27-32). Now this is a remarkable claim. I know of no parallel to such an extensive omission on this ground, nor have I been able to discover anyone who does. Even Professor Filson admits (in conversation) that the case is unique as far as he knows. A calculation based on Swete's text of the passage indicates that the omission amounts to about the bulk of a page and three-quarters of 967. It is extremely difficult to see how this omission could have occurred if the scribe's exemplar was of a form at all approximating that of 967. And on any ground it is so improbable as to compel skeptical examination of the theory. I fail to see what Filson makes of his comment

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that the manuscript breaks off at 37:4, for it follows 36:23*a* *immediately* with 38:1. Likewise his emphasis on the fact that 967 breaks off in the middle of verse 23 seems misplaced. A look at the verse should show that the termination comes at a natural point; the Hebrew text itself suggests that the balance of the verse is an addition. Briefly, Filson has no supporting evidence for his remarkable theory except the admitted fact that ending of chapter 36 in 967 is similar to that in our familiar Greek texts. But even more unsatisfactory is his treatment of Thackeray's observations on the passage. He charges Thackeray with, not one theory, but three, and comes to the conclusion that "codex 967 does not support Thackeray's theory in any of its three forms, and Thackeray's arguments do not support the originality of the text of codex 967." But this is to confuse the issue. Filson has neglected the basic fact that Thackeray showed this passage to be separate and distinct from its context and from all the Greek of Ezekiel. In other words, we have here a totally foreign body inserted into our familiar LXX text. It matters little how Thackeray explained this fact; the fact itself is the crucial matter. And now when our earliest Greek text of Ezekiel—a pre-Hexaplaric text, be it observed—presents us with the astonishing situation that precisely this passage is not in it, when Thackeray (who certainly knew more than a little about the literature of the period) speculated that our familiar Greek renderings of the passage comes from a Jewish or Christian lectionary, and when, too, the editors of the Scheide papyrus entertain the view that the passage is later than Theodotion, then all fits together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Filson has failed actually to face up to the determinative facts of the case.

[4] Johnson, Gehman, and Kase, *op. cit.*, p. 5; Kenyon, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

[5] The editors of the Scheide papyrus come somewhat hesitantly to the view that a date subsequent to Theodotion should be entertained (*op. cit.*, p. 11). It is some satisfaction to myself that when first I learned, some years ago, of the evidence of No. 967 and turned eagerly to my old notes to see what had been my judgment on the passage, I found that I had written, "Surely from the Diaspora."

stand if we are careful as to the meaning we read into this word "closed." The debates at Jamnia as to the advisability of segregating Ezekiel in the Genizah[6] take on new meaning in the light of this situation; those rabbis knew that it was current literature, receiving accretions almost, if not quite, into their own times. And what, then, is the significance of the unqualified statement of the Baraitha (Baba Bathra 15a) that "the men of the Great Synagogue wrote Ezekiel"? Did this writer also know some things that have been hidden from us?

A study of this late passage, as far as we know the latest in the Book of Ezekiel and probably in the entire Old Testament, is rewarding. Here we have concrete evidence of the phrases "take you from the nations, and gather you from the lands," and the like, arising in the time of the Diaspora; this is not the Babylonian golah but the wider dissemination of the Jewish people which, though beginning early, is characteristic of, roughly, the Macedonian period and onward. This fact would not in itself compel a similar dating of all such passages; but, when taken in connection with their internal implications, it is practically conclusive. It is of value, also, to observe how this late homilist is in the direct succession of commentators on the Book of Ezekiel for perhaps five hundred years before him; he too cites passages and phrases in the authorized book of his time, expounding and applying them to the religious needs of his own day. But, indeed, to speak of singular authorship is misleading, for the section is composite. The resumption of the idea of cleansing from defilement in verse 29 is indicative of a new comment. The stern rebuke in 31-32 is distinct from the winsome kindliness of 24-28. The new beginnings in 33 and 37 are also of moment, more particularly in view of the change of wording; in verse 25 the Jews were to be cleansed from their טמאות ("uncleannesses"), but here (vs. 33) from their עונות ("iniquities"). Inhabiting the cities and rebuilding the desolations is a different emphasis, too, from verses 29-30. But it is to be noted how these sections comment on the chapter as it lay before them, first seizing on the mention of defilement in the genuine oracle, then presently alluding to the inhospitable reputation of the land mentioned in 13f. And later the author of verses 33-36 comments on all of these and as well on the phrases of chapter 6 which have come through, as we saw, into the first section of the chapter. And the latest commentator (vss. 37-38) remarks piously on the glowing promises of the immediately preceding section but thinks also of verse 30, for he uses its verb for the increase of the population in that idyllic time of hope. In the light of the dating of the passage, the words of this latest writer about the flocks of sacrificial lambs in the festivals at Jerusalem take on vivid relevance from the mention by Josephus[7] of their immense numbers; the two must have been nearly contemporary and refer to a situation familiar to both of them.

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[6] Cf. Solomon Zeitlin, An Historical Study of the Canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures (Philadelphia, 1933), pp. 2 ff.

However, critical interests must not obscure the major worth of this whole passage. The doctrine of the new heart and the gift of the divine spirit is one of the great thoughts of the Old Testament. It is in harmony with the whole trend of Jewish thought which saw clearly the roots of human conduct in the "heart" and was to issue in rabbinic theology in the concept of the יצר טוב ("good mind") and יצר רע ("bad mind").[8] But it blends, too, with the teaching of the wise men that the divine "wisdom" was the source of all our good. It is of interest, though, that we have found a basis for dating, though loosely, one at least of these Old Testament passages about the new heart. It is very late: close to the beginning of the present era.

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[7] B.J. vi. 9. 3; cf. Targ. Jon. I Sam. 15:4; Pesach. 64b; Tosephta Pesach. 4:3.

[8] Cf. Maxwell Silver, The Ethics of Judaism from the Aspect of Duty (1938), chap. iv.

V

CHAPTER 11, VERSES 14-25

The sequence from chapter 36 to this passage is dictated by the matters of which we have just now been speaking. For here are the same thoughts, in almost the same words: here, again, we have the gathering from the peoples and collecting from the lands and the giving of another heart and spirit. So we need not argue the spuriousness—indeed, the very late origin—of some part of the present passage. But our first concern must be whether it contains genuine material.

We find ourselves at once expectant; for here in verse 14 is our now familiar introduction that comes from the hand of Ezekiel himself. But the new formula in 16, with the characteristic commentators' citation of its original, as well as the content of the verse, dealing as it does with the scattering of the Jews among lands and peoples, renders it clear that the genuine oracle, if such exists, must be confined to verse 15. Nor do we remain long in doubt; for if we recognize וכל־בית ישראל כלה ("and all the House of Israel, all of it") as of secondary origin, a view which receives corroboration from the result which then emerges, we secure this:

אחיך אחיך   אנשי גאלתך
אשר אמרו להם   ישבי ירושלם
רחקו מעל יהוה   לנו נתנה הארץ למורשה

Ezekiel's method and style have by now become so familiar that we need waste no time arguing the genuineness of this. Further, we are in the happy position of having the oracle clearly delimited, so that there can remain but little doubt that it was just this and no more; and that meager element of uncertainty inheres alone in the phrase which just now we urged should be deleted. But of it more in a moment.

The word גאלתך demands some study. It is somewhat commonly taken to mean "kinsmen," presumably by reason of its parallel with אחיך. And Matthews then deduces the attractive meaning from the passage that the rude rebuff by the people of Jerusalem is offered to a group of priests, Ezekiel's relatives and associates, who had come to Jerusalem under the provisions of the Deuteronomic reform, but here as quasi-foreigners are repudiated by the people of the city. His view rests, however,. on the belief that the Book of Ezekiel reveals evidence of the prophet's northern origin. Unfortunately, this dissipates completely under critical analysis. When we take account as well of the dubious nature of the rendering "kinsmen," we are compelled to abandon Matthews' interesting theory. For some scholars accept the validity of the LXX rendering *τηś αἰχμαλωσίας σου* as evidencing an original גלותך . As a matter of fact, this rendering "kinsmen" is attributed to גאלה nowhere else in the Old Testament. The word occurs thirteen times and consistently everywhere except here is taken to mean "redemption," "right of redemption," or "property to be redeemed"; there is not the least basis for postulating any other meaning for the word. The strange rendering in this passage is purely a desperate effort to make sense, where certainly the meaning "redemption" would give none. Simply, then, גְּאֻלָּתֶךָ is not right, and LXX is! And then the matter becomes clear. We deal not with corruption of the text but with an early effort to vocalize it. The aleph was written into the word to represent the vowel we now call qamets.[1] There is not a doubt that the original said, "Your brothers, your exile."

Herntrich grasped at the thought that thus Ezekiel speaks of the exiles who went to Babylonia in 597 B.C., though himself still in Jerusalem, a location which Herntrich is eager to emphasize. But what can be meant by the pronominal suffix in that case? How were they Ezekiel's exiles? The idea is untenable; it could have arisen at all only under stress of a theory. And, abandoning all such, the word becomes quite lucid. It means simply "your fellow-exiles." There appears no reasonable escape from the conclusion that Ezekiel is here numbered with the exiles, and to this group the men of Jerusalem address their insult. But, then, it is evident that the word רחקו is correctly pointed in the massoretic text; it must be an imperative. The perfect form, which some favor, gives an inferior sense. Why should the men of Jerusalem have told Ezekiel that his brothers and fellow-exiles had gone away from the Lord? Not less peculiar would be the situation if these folk of Jerusalem are represented as telling Ezekiel's "brothers" that they (i.e., apparently, the exiles of 597) are gone far away. But the oracle takes on life and vivid meaning when we recognize that it says quite plainly:

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[1] I.e., the word is to be read גָּלוּתֶךָ , just as LXX evidences. For such use of aleph cf. Stade, Hebräische Grammatik (1879) § 31.

> Your brothers, your brothers, the men exiled with you,
> are they of whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem say,
> Begone from the Lord!
> To us the land is given in possession.

And גאלתך means just that: Ezekiel was one of a group of exiles at whom the remaining Jews of Jerusalem jeered, congratulating themselves that now everything was theirs.

We need lose little time investigating the situation. Ezekiel was in Jerusalem through the reign of Zedekiah; we have seen in chapters 4-5 and verses 11-12 of chapter 6 that he was still there as the actual siege of the city dragged on into ever more serious crisis. We shall presently find him uttering a notable oracle just before the defense collapsed. So it is out of the question to associate him with the exiles of 597 B.C. But here in the passage we are discussing he is one of a mournful group numbered for exile after the city had at last fallen on that terrible day in 586. And just before they leave, the unfeeling scum of population too worthless to be carried off likewise jeer at them and rejoice that they are themselves to have undisputed possession of the land.[2] So Ezekiel did go to Babylonia!

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[2] The interpretation will not be essentially altered if Torrey's conjecture be right that the first אחיך ("your brothers") is to be emended to אחיה ("I will preserve") (see Pseudo-Ezekiel, p. 41).

Herntrich is right that his work began in Jerusalem in Zedekiah's reign. But tradition is vindicated to the extent at least that he was among the exiles. Whether we have any knowledge of his life and activity in the land where he was to join fellow-countrymen gone eleven years before is one of the interesting problems of the evidence that lies still before us.

The oracle is highly typical of Ezekiel; it is more than usually cryptic and allusive. Its touch is so light that one asks just what reply Ezekiel was making to these selfish folk. And there is no evident answer save that it sufficed thus to hold them up to obloquy. But this solution is not very convincing. And we shall find—once again to lean upon prospective results—that Ezekiel not infrequently comments on popular sayings or questions, introducing his remarks with an imperative, usually of אמר ("say"). Further, in 33:23-27 there occurs a notable parallel to the present passage: a similar remark of the ignorant people of the land, but with the important difference that Ezekiel replies to it in a brief passage, introduced, as we shall see, by לכן אמר כה אמר אדני יהוה ("Therefore say, Thus says the Lord"), which is identically the beginning of verse 16 here.[3] But we have already commented on the spurious content of this verse, and no reason has arisen to reconsider this judgment. Its reference is beyond a doubt to the Diaspora. Then we see what has happened. Ezekiel did provide a reply to the unfeeling taunt of his fellow-citizens, but nothing of it is preserved except the introduction. In its place some late writer has inserted his views on the wide dispersion of the Jewish people.

Now we can turn to the commentary in verses 16 ff. It will not surprise us to find that it is composite, Verse 16 stands by itself, verses 17-21 are independent, and verses 22-25 are obviously the conclusion of the recent "cherub" passage. Verse 16 is commentary on the oracle, but 17-21 comment on 16. Both, however, are false to the situation, for the oracle speaks of the Exile, but they refer to the Diaspora. Our growing familiarity with the habits of the commentators will now solve one small problem. The word מקדש ("sanctuary") in verse 16 must be a corruption of מורש ("possession"); the Lord has sent them far away, just as was said in verse 12, but the men of Jerusalem were wrong in claiming that they should have the possession; the Lord himself has been the possession of the exiles, "small" though that possession may have seemed to the materially minded folk. The thought is reminiscent of the pious explanations of the landless state of the Levites; it parallels some greater passages in Jeremiah and the Exilic literature; but, more significant, it is an index of the deepening faith that was to prove the life of Judaism through many a trial in the long succeeding centuries.

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[3] It occurs in our accepted text of vs. 17 also. But the textual tradition is uncertain here. Further, the content of the verse is obviously but commentary on vs. 16.

Little need by said of verses 17-21, since, as already remarked, they are so like the passage in chapter 36, from which we have just come. It is notable that here also the thought takes presently a more stern turn, for verse 21 is a threat to the recalcitrant. But of greater interest is the question whether this promise of the new heart and spirit is as late as the other. We have no answer beyond what may be deduced (or conjectured) from the whole situation. It is a matter of keen disappointment that the extant portion of No. 967 begins as a tattered fragment of papyrus from which the editor has with great skill made out the last words of 11:25 and then a clearly legible text of most of the first six verses of chapter 12.[4] How tantalizing! If only a few previous lines had been preserved, what might they have revealed?

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[4] Frederic G. Kenyon, *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri: Description and Texts of Twelve Manuscripts on Papyrus of the Greek Bible*, Fasc. VII: *Ezekiel, Daniel, Esther* (London, 1938).

VI

CHAPTER 24

Here first in our order of study we meet a famous feature that is at the same time a contentious problem of the Book of Ezekiel, a dated utterance. The problem can be solved, if at all, only by the method we are following, that of induction. So in this case we assume no final attitude but rather observe and draw only such tentative conclusions as the present evidence can support. The date is accurate; that is soon established by comparison, if necessary, with I Kings 25:1 and Jer. 52:4. However, this is of little consequence; every Jew knew, and knows, this date. An editor could have inserted it quite as well as Ezekiel. And we are disturbed by the fact that, while other dates are built into the structure of an opening sentence, this is merely intruded into the midst of the familiar genuine introductory formula; it might be lifted out without requiring the alteration of a single consonant—indeed, with the result of improving the sentence. However this may be, the introduction seems to be expanded. The threefold mention of the day, in verse 2, and the repetition of עצם היום הזה ("this very day") are quite unlike Ezekiel's compact style. The address to בית־המרי ("the rebellious house") in verse 3 deserves remark. We shall find this phrase later in a certainly spurious context; but that does not suffice to adjudge it foreign to the present passage. Rather we must examine the circumstances carefully. The governing verb משל ("utter a parable") occurs, in various forms, a total of sixteen times in the Old Testament, six of these in the Book of Ezekiel.[1] Only in the latter is it used with the cognate accusative, but the remarkable fact is that here this construction is predominant. It occurs in 17:2; 18:2; and 21:25 and in the present passage, 24:3; besides, in 12:23, though the noun is in the preceding clause, it is taken up in the accusative אותו . Only in 16:44 is the verb construed entirely without cognate accusative. Here, then, is a small but striking feature which we are justified in regarding as a peculiarity of Ezekiel, since as we advance we shall discover that all these passages are genuine except 16:44. But a further fact emerges: the normal construction is that the accusative follows the verb immediately; the single exception is 24:3. There can be little doubt, then, that the phrase אל־בית־המרי is a later insertion; it is one more mark of the bitterly critical mood of the editors of this book toward their own people.

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[1] Num. 21:27; Isa. 14:10 and 41:5; Ps. 28:1; 49:13, 21; and 143:7; Job 17:6; 30:19; and 41:25; and Ezek. 12:23; 16:44; 17:2; 18:2; 21:5; and 24:3.

The chapter falls obviously into two main sections: (*a*) verses 1-14 and (*b*) 15-27. One might set verses 25-27 apart as a third section, but they are of trivial consequence such as not to deserve this attention; and in any case they propose to refer to 15-24.

Section (*a*) is composite. The repetition of לכן כה אמר אדני יהוה ("therefore thus says the Lord") makes this at once apparent. But what, then, is the origin of the separate passages? These introductory phrases would commonly in other prophetic books introduce genuine oracles. And such view has here also some plausible appeal, for verses 6-8 and 9-13 seem to be independent discussions of parallel themes. The analysis of the prophetic books with which the name of T. H. Robinson is prominently associated will suggest itself here for serious consideration. He finds three types of material: "A. Poetry (usually oracular, though with a few exceptions), B. Prose in the third person (almost invariably laying stress on events in the life of the prophet), C. Prose in the first person (often describing inner experiences and normally concentrated on the message)."[2] But it will be immediately apparent that "B" is not relevant in the present case. Whether or not the passages under discussion are poetry will perhaps be subject to individual judgment; but certainly they are not descriptive of "events in the life of the prophet."[3] Equally they are not "C." All that then remains, if we are to retain them in the original structure of the book, is to weigh the alternatives that they are the prophet's extensions of his oracle in verses 3-5 or that they are genuine but independent oracles on parallel themes, the interweaving of the vocabulary then evidencing Ezekiel's obsession with the topic.

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[2] Quoted from a personal letter, to which I gladly confess indebtedness for valuable suggestions.

It must be conceded that these possibilities are attractive, for the passages evidence a sort of metrical form such as to support a theory of original poetic structure. Further, they contain enough new material to lead to the belief that they are extensions of verses 3-5. Yet closer examination renders it highly dubious that they are separate oracles, for it is apparent that they depend closely on verses 3-5 for their meaning. This is especially clear in verses 9 ff., made up so largely, as they are, of phrases from the oracle, but further depending on it for their entire concept of a boiling, or burning, pot. But likewise verses 6-8 cannot stand alone; here also is the figure of the pot, which would be meaningless without the introduction actually provided by the present structure of the chapter. The same applies to mention of ritual pieces. However, one might take the position that these have been inserted into an original oracle about a "city of blood," which perhaps ran somewhat thus:

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[3] Verse 24 comes close to fulfiling the conditions for "B"; and it would then be the only passage of this type in the entire book. But "C" finds many illustrations: most of chapters 1-3; 8-10; 37:1-10, and much else, including the introductions to the several oracles. The oracles would presumably be classed as "A." But this is to say nothing as to the genuineness of anything in the book, a question that can be answered only along the inductive line we are following in this study. Besides, it will be recognized, there is an immense bulk of material which will submit to classification under none of these three heads but is, as noted already, later commentary written into the book. The Book of Ezekiel is unique in the prophetic canon and has had a history diverse from the others. Its closest parallel was probably the Book of the Twelve (cf. R. H. Wolfe, "The Editing of the Book of the Twelve," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, XII [1935], 90-129).

Woe to the city of blood!
  For its blood was within it.
Do not pour it on the ground
  for the dust to cover it.

Yet certainly it is not a very impressive result! There is no apparent reason other than presupposition why one should omit the phrase, "The pot whose filth is in it." Equally the alleged oracle itself demands the presence of the pot; how else is the blood contained so as not to be poured out on the ground? And if the pot, then also the ritual pieces must have a place here—and we are back to essentially the present form of the verses; to avoid this is to make, rather than find, an oracle in these verses.

The passages, then, are not independent oracles. We are thrown back on the alternative that they are extensions of the utterance in verses 3-5. It is a conclusion that may be freely conceded; the one important question is, "Who did the extending?" That it was not Ezekiel is shown by the circumstance, already familiar in this study, that the verses are false to the thought of the genuine oracle in verses 3-5. The disparity is not so striking as in chapters 15 and 4, yet it may not be ignored. Instead of the certain doom of the people confined within their walls as in a pot, which is the theme of the oracle, these passages snatch at the idea of bones and pieces; supposing that they imply some sort of uncleanness, they then develop the notion of a brew of badness that is to be poured on the sacred rock. Indeed, at verse 11 this thought goes the length of adding rust to the other filth; and all is properly interpreted by the words טמאה ("uncleanness") and עלילות ("evil deeds") to make the city's guilt specific. Doubtless Ezekiel would have conceded that the doom of the city came on it because of its wickedness. But this is not the theme of his oracle; rather it is the inevitability of destruction. This he has presented in his typical allusive style. Equally it is characteristic of the commentators that they have developed a related, but quite distinct, thought. The differentiation of the two is further enhanced by the commentators' habit of quotation—we have already noted references to the pot and the ritual pieces, but a still more astonishing citation will appear in a moment.

To return, then, to the original oracle. Fortunately, we are not obliged in this chapter to demonstrate the presence of metrical form, for it is commonly recognized that after a prose introduction the passage merges midway in verse 3 into poetry. But the limits and the original form of this poem are not clear. The first three stichoi may be accepted without question. But the tristich in verse 4 confronts us with difficulty. The conclusion deserves constant emphasis that the *sporadic* occurrence of such lines is an almost unfailing mark of corruption. But happily the problem is not serious in this case, for כל נתח טוב ("every good piece") in 4*b* is to be recognized as a redundant gloss. The choice bones and the choice of the flock (5*a*) are sufficiently out of keeping with the thought at this point to fall foul of the same charge. With this the fourth stichos emerges, clear and uninjured by its long burial. But 5*b*-*c* is difficult to the point of impossibility. Happily the last stichos of 5 is good; we may assume tentatively that it is original, except to read with 4*c* and 5*b* עצמים ("bones") for עצמיה ("her bones"). The bones are in place here as they were not in verse 4, where the pot was just in process of being filled with pieces of meat. But at this point we reach the end of the oracle. Yet this cannot be all. We are in acute difficulty, for to seek the balance of the original poem in the corrupt and deficient material available in 5*b*-*c* can result only in guessing.

But the commentators have done us several good turns in the chapters already studied. Do their citations here provide any clue to the riddle? The first one helps little; we have already seen his attestation of נתחיה ("her pieces")—of which we had no doubts anyhow; and then he runs off with his notion of the filthy mess in the pot, which he wants poured out on a bare rock, apparently the sacred rock under the altar of burnt offerings in the temple. But the second commentator seizes our attention, for verse 10 begins with a good 2:2:2 line. Is it a quotation? Then see the two last words of 9, compare them with 5*b*, and we see at once what has happened; וגם דור העצמים ("and also a pile of bones") is a corruption of גדל המדורה ("great the heap"), with then עצמים ("bones") drawn in either from the following line or as a corruption of עצים ("wood"). And the verb גדל ("great") is obviously to be written as a Hiph'il infinitive absolute, in harmony with those following; its first-person imperfect in verse 9 is clearly due to the construction with אני ("I"). For התם ("finish") in verse 10 we are to accept the reading of verse 5 רתח ("boil"). And so the poem reveals itself not by conjectural emendation but with the use of very early textual evidence:

שפת הסיר שפת   וגם־יצק בו מים
אסף נתחיה אליה   ירך וכתף לקוח

הגדל המדורה תחתיה   גם־בשלו עצמים בתוכה
הרבה העצים   הדלק האש   רתח הבשר

Put on the pot!
Pour water in, too;
gather in it ritual flesh,
take shank and shoulder.

Heap high the fuel beneath;
boil bones within.
Take much wood,
fan the fire,
boil the flesh!

The exposition of the oracle is simple. Ezekiel takes the popular proverb which we find quoted in verse 3 of chapter 11 and in his typical light, allusive way applies it to the impending fate of the city. Jerusalem is the pot, just as we are told in chapter 11, but here it is Jerusalem as the center of the cultus. This is the significance of the ritual word נתחים ("pieces"). Just as the sacrificial pieces are thrown into consecrated pots in the temple for boiling, so the inhabitants of the city will stew to bare bones besieged within the great caldron of the defensive works and walls of Jerusalem. There is no hope of escape but only horrible dissolution. Appropriately the oracle is described as a משל ("parable"). The time of its utterance may have been as early as the superscription claims; internal evidence would lead us to put it somewhat later, yet it is insufficient basis for us to dispute the force of the tradition. Contrary to Ezekiel's common repute, there is some suggestion of criticism if not repudiation of the ritual of the temple.

Section b (vss. 15 ff.) has also the genuine introduction. And when it is seen that the opening words of verse 17 are certainly a gloss, a genuine oracle immediately declares itself. But, as commonly in this book, the difficulty is where we should stop. This would seem to be settled by the passage itself, which runs into narrative in verse 18; in other words, verses 16-17 present themselves as the oracle. And harmonious with this conclusion a good pair of metrical lines is to be recognized in verse 17, if we ignore the opening words as some sort of glossing or expansion. Beginning with פארך ("your turban") the verse scans readily as a 3:3 followed by a 2:2:2 line—a metrical form quite frequent in Ezekiel. But then uncertainties arise. If this is accepted, then the oracle will consist of four lines, which however will not readily subdivide into two couplets. Now the true quatrain does exist in Old Testament poetry, but it is rare. Most of those so called (apart from the mistaken practice of scholars who apply the term to distich couplets, i.e., to four stichoi) are really stanzas of two couplets. Further, in no other passage in Ezekiel does the possibility of a quatrain arise; its actuality here is then suspect. But more cogent is the fact that this second "couplet" is but a weak expansion or detailing of what is already told in the first (vs. 16); its content is but illustrative of the command not to lament. Such usage is contrary to the concise style of Ezekiel. But it is typical of our so-called "cataloguing" commentator. And this is the conclusion that finally commends itself. Verse 17 is a spurious expansion of the original utterance of the prophet. It is of more than passing interest thus to find that poetic structure in this book is not limited to the work of Ezekiel.

הנני לקח ממך   את־מחמד עיניך במגפה
ולא תספד   ולא תבכה   ולא תבא דמעתך

Behold, I am taking from you
  the delight of your eyes, by disease.
Do not lament;
  do not weep,
  nor let your tears flow.

The oracle is followed by an account of its delivery, and then the reaction of the people and Ezekiel's explanation in reply to their question. What is to be our judgment of this?

At least we shall not consider it necessary to carve up and piece together the text, as Bertholet has done. The fad of correcting the order of the Hebrew has carried too many scholars into absurdity. It commonly happens that when we give more attention to understanding the text we feel less need of tampering with it. But, to go on: this passage (vss. 18-23) is entirely different from any commentator's work that we have found hitherto. A priori, there is no reason against, but every reason for, the people's having asked the prophet to explain his cryptic sayings and symbolic acts. The analogy of the experience of Jesus has already been brought to our attention. Moreover, the account of the prophet's experience employs the familiar phraseology דבר יהוה אלי לאמר ("the word of the Lord to me saying"), words that would be very easy to copy, it is true, but which as a matter of fact seldom are. Then we find the actual explanation (vs. 21) beginning with הנני ("Behold I") as is frequent in genuine utterances. And, as a culminating consideration, the words of the explanation will scan. Our conclusion, then, is obvious. Ezekiel did on occasion, specifically on this occasion, reply to the question of his auditors with an interpretation of his oracles. The precise limits of the genuine explanation in this passage are not easy to determine. It is of a nature readily lending itself to expansion, both from the oracle and from commentators' ideas. With certain deletions, more or less obvious, one can find poetic form right through 23a. It is possible that considerable of this is original. But if we may once again lean on evidence not yet presented, the brief, cryptic character of Ezekiel's explanations, not less than of his oracles, provides some balance of probability that we need reckon with only the single tristich line:

הנני מחלל את־מקדשי מחמד עיניכם ועשיתם כאשר עשיתי

> Behold, I am about to defile my sanctuary,
> the desire of your eyes;
> then you shall do as I have done.

The death of Ezekiel's wife provides occasion for disagreement among exegetes. Hölscher is contemptuous of the narrative as the invention of the editor. Matthews more quietly repudiates it, properly pointing out that the "desire of the eyes" is stated in verse 21 to be the sanctuary. Bertholet and Cooke feel no problem. The variant of LXX has long been recognized; but Cooke, following Cornill, is not convinced. Yet, when the excellent authority of the Vaticanus manuscript is now supported by the testimony of No. 967, we must recognize a high probability that the original translator of the Greek version did not read any account of Ezekiel's bereavement. Whether that was his failure is precisely the matter at issue.

There is no improbability in the prophet's having thus anticipated the death of his wife. Nor need we then invoke the psychic abnormality which is all too commonly attributed to Ezekiel; before this study is finished it will be realized that his reputation in this regard rests entirely on spurious material. It may have been that the woman was already very sick. But the major question is whether or not anything happened to her: in fact, whether she was there at all; for it should be realized that apart from Hosea's union with Gomer, and the present doubtful passage, we do not know that any one of the canonical prophets had a wife.[4]

It is clear that Ezekiel did something which provoked the curiosity of the people; in fact, verse 18 states specifically that as well as speaking to them he did as he was commanded. And this act cannot have been a mere abstention from mourning, which in itself is but a negation of action. But, on the contrary, if circumstances were such as to call normally for mourning, then abstention would serve to provoke the people's inquiry. Yet, when we recall Ezekiel's symbolic drama in chapters 4-5, we must entertain doubt that the present incident was anything more. The parallel of the two passages is very close; both recount in metrical form the ostensibly divine instructions for a symbolic drama to be enacted by the prophet. Further, there is not a doubt of the correctness of the interpretation noted above, that in the present case the drama prefigured the desolation of the Temple. However, the question at issue is: What was the drama through which Ezekiel depicted this? Clearly he represented himself before the people as under deep sorrow but refusing to practice the usual rites of mourning. But this comes close to saying that apparently he acted the part of a bereaved husband; so that in the end we find ourselves quibbling over the question whether he had a real wife who died or only a make-believe one. There is, then, no adequate ground for denying the reality of his sorrow. Apparently he realized the approaching demise of his wife and then saw the parallel of his personal experience to that of the nation and sought by the means here described to publish his warning.

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[4] Isaiah is no exception; on Isa. 8:3 see J. M. Powis Smith, *The Prophets and Their Times* (2d ed., 1941), p. 94. However, the point is not to deny prophetic marriages but merely to emphasize our ignorance of them.

The incident must have occurred during the siege, probably near its termination. Like all his utterances as yet studied, it is one of threat. The temple is to be desecrated; and the people will be too stunned with the catastrophe to give way to normal mourning.

Verse 24 is interesting as one of the rare biographical notes of the book; it is too empty of content to delay us, however. Besides, its spurious origin is so obvious as to merit no demonstration.[5] Verses 25-27 are of a similar nature. As Ezekiel's career becomes clearer to us, we shall probably find that there was no need for a fugitive from the city to bring word of its fall: Ezekiel knew it all too well. The dumbness of verse 27 has persisted, not since the incident of 3:26, as most expositors believe, but relates only to the "silent" groaning of the spurious addition in verse 17 above. One more prop of the postulated logical organization of the book has tottered!

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[5] The contrary view is common (see, inter alia, Bewer in AJSL, L [1934], 100).

VII

CHAPTER 21

Like many chapters of the Book of Ezekiel, this is composed of several independent sections. Verses 1-5 are concerned with the fire in the South; 6-10, with the sword against Jerusalem; 11-12, with Ezekiel's lamentation; 13-22, with the sharp sword; and 24-32, with Nebuchadrezzar's divination; while verses 33-37 are ostensibly a threat against the Ammonites. The genuine introductory formula occurs in verses 1, 6, 13, and 23. So we are prepared for the probability of some material from Ezekiel. And, indeed, it is commonly recognized that a poem from his hand is preserved here, the Song of the Sword (vss. 13 ff.), though the efforts to recover its original form are seldom convincing.[1]

The presumption of a genuine utterance in the first section is heightened by the popular comment recorded in verse 5, which, as a result of our recent discussion of a similar passage, we shall be prepared to accept with little hesitation. The oracle in verses 3-4 falls readily into metric form—one may be pardoned some uneasiness in boldly calling it poetry—if it is convincing to reason that Ezekiel did not need to specify the burning of dry trees, since everyone knows that they burn in a forest fire. We recognize a couplet, the first line in 3:3 measure, and the second 2:2:2, though its feet seem rather heavy.

הנני מצית־בך אש   ואכלה בך כל־עץ־לח
לא תכבה להבת   ונצרברבה כל־פנים   מנגב צפונה

Behold, I am about to kindle fire in you,
  and it will consume in you every green tree.

The flame you cannot quench,
  but all faces will be burned by it,
  from south to north.

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[1] See, *inter alia*, Paul Haupt, "Ezekiel's Song of the Sword," *American Journal of Philology*, XLVII (1926), 315 ff.

The passage alludes in the familiar figure of fire to the oncoming of the Babylonian hosts and threatens complete desolation of the land. It must have been uttered either shortly before or soon after the invasion. Verse 4 is a typical piece of commentary, its universal application in כל בשר ("all flesh") according well with this later origin.

But verse 5 may not be dismissed so lightly. We shall have considerable occasion to note that Ezekiel's utterances are not confined to oracles proper, but, on the contrary, he commonly takes account of questions or reactions of his social group. The present passage has the further attractiveness that it represents these people as commenting on the parobolic character of his teaching, a feature which we also have had reason to remark. However, the phrase ואמר אהה יהוה ("And I said, Ah! Lord") occurs four times in the Book of Ezekiel—in 4:14, 9:8, 11:13, and the present passage. The other three are unquestionably spurious. We have already discussed 4:14 and shall presently have occasion to dismiss the claims of the other two as well. Clearly there was some commentator or glossator who made use of this phrase in order to ascribe attitudes and utterances to Ezekiel. The present passage, then, is in bad company! But not infrequently good repute may be unjustly besmirched by evil association. Without too great conviction it seems best to concede the point here to the more conservative position and list 21:5 among genuine passages. Apparently we are then to consider ואמר אהה יהוה a case of anacrusis,[2] and the balance of the verse falls into a distich line. The brief saying will then be of interest as comparable with the famous personal passages in the Book of Jeremiah. It would seem that Ezekiel was influenced by his great contemporary in thus speaking of his problems in working as a prophet, but his remark is much less impressive than the great meditations of Jeremiah.

Hölscher thinks verses 6 ff. an editorial interpretation of the preceding oracle. This is possible. One is struck with the close similarity of form; equally the thought is identical, but here presented objectively as against the preceding figure. The editors of the Scheide papyrus advance also a cogent consideration. They calculate that between 20:44 and the resumption of the broken papyrus leaf in 21:19 the text is shorter by some five or six lines, "or ca. 110-132 letters," than our familiar rendering in the Vaticanus manuscript.[3] However, this bulk does not correspond to any obvious section of these verses. The presumed oracle in verses 6-8 is of more than 275 letters in the Greek translation; that in verses 1-3 is well over 300. In the end we can do nothing better than recognize that the Scheide papyrus may indicate some late development of our massoretic text, but then accept the latter, however, reluctantly, as the best we know. There is no reason why Ezekiel should not have repeated himself as is done in these two brief contiguous utterances. Further, the heavy introduction in 6-8a and the reputed oracle are highly typical of his style; a sort of meter can be made out in verse 8. Nothing need be added to what has been said of the date of verses 1-3; it holds here also. Verses 9-10 are characteristic commentary; it is worth noting that the passage that precedes was in essentially its present form when these were added, for they comment on both oracles and on the spurious verse 4.

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[2] Cf. T. H. Robinson, "Anacrusis in Hebrew Poetry," *Beiheft 66 zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* (1936), pp. 37-40.

Verses 11-12 must be considered genuine, notwithstanding Hölscher's well-based jibe that Ezekiel groans theatrically by command when he is assured of a proper audience! A good 3:3 line is apparent in verse 11—after ואתה בןאדם ("and you, son of man"), which, as generally, is to be regarded as an anacrustic beginning of the poem. The question and answer in verse 12 serve further to authenticate the brief utterance. In the content of the latter, close similarities to passages in chapter 7 will be noted; it is probable that with an original suggestion the answer has been further harmonized by an editor.

The Song of the Sword is not so lightly dismissed. As a problem in text criticism it is very difficult. But, fortunately, resources for its solution are somewhat rich. The passage is an excellent illustration of the prime importance of the Hebrew text itself, far surpassing that of the LXX, for criticism of the Book of Ezekiel. We observe that the sword is sharpened in verses 14, 15, and 16. It is polished in verse 15, twice in 16, and apparently in 20 (since the suggested reading מרטה ["polished"] for מעטה ["whetted?"] seems highly probable). Perhaps also we are to recognize מרטה behind מאסת ("despising") and so find it a second time in 15 and again in 18. Similarly on the evidence of LXX in verse 15 מבח ("slaughter") appears to have been corrupted into שבט ("rod"); hence we would see the former repeated in 15, occurring in this secondary form in 18, and again in 20 both unmistakably and in the corrupted form אבחת . The giving of the sword is related twice in 16 and once more in 20. The striking of hands is found in 17, 19, and 22. Now, even if some of these identifications be denied, enough remains to give us pause. This is nothing else than multiple recension. It would be sufficiently clear in any case; it is doubly sure in view of the compact, terse style of Ezekiel. He did not write in this fashion. Here we have, then, that series of variants for which the Old Testament critic has devoutly longed; but, instead of being scattered through many manuscripts of varying authority, the scribes have collected them into one; and by this device have authenticated all as of high antiquity.

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[3] A. C. Johnson, H. S. Gehman, and E. H. Kase, The John H. Scheide Biblical Papyri: Ezekiel (1938), p. 11.

But even this is not the end. A glance at the ostensible oracle against Ammon (vss. 33 ff.) shows that it is nothing of the sort but merely a typical piece of commentary, quoting the immediately preceding commentary and as well the words, in part, of this Song of the Sword. Here, then, with considerable help from LXX are our rich, though perplexing, resources for the recovery of the original of this oracle.

The first stichos will delay us but a moment; the text in 14 is good. Verse 33 gives the variant פתוחה ("opened"), but the evidence in 14, 15, 16, and 20 is heavily against this. And the second stichos is also reasonably easy. Here the testimony of verse 33 provides a clue to open the mysteries of its parallel verses; in it the sword was "polished for slaughter." And now we recognize that the sequence from 14 to 15 gives us precisely that, though the words are in reverse order from those of 33. But we note that in 15*b* מרטה is followed, after the intervention of the strange או נשיש ("or we shall rejoice") by שבט ("rod"), which we noted above is corrupt for טבח ("slaughter"); again, מרטה is followed in 16 by an infinitive with lamedh, and in 20 its corrupt equivalent מעטה is followed by לטבח. Once again, though grateful for the clarifying evidence of 33, we must decide in favor of the testimony of 14 ff. and read מרטה לטבח ("polished for slaughter").

The second line began with the giving into the hand of the slayer; we have the text precisely at the end of 16, except for some uncertainty as to the form of the verb. The beginning of 16 has waw with third-person imperfect, which, however, the Vulgate read as first-person perfect. And this is what we have in 20 and in 36 (with waw), the latter of which seems to be quoting. On the other hand, the imperative in 19 carries some implication that this verb may also have been imperative: briefly that לתת ("to give") in 16 and 34 may be confused from an original תן ("give"). As we shall see, however, the difference is slight in its bearing on the meaning; so we shall probably do best to accept the preponderant evidence and read נתתי ("I have given"). The second stichos of this line again reveals the importance of the commentary in 33. If for הכיל ("to contain") we read ההל ("to shine") and then transpose למען ("in order to"), we see in a sudden illumination the meaning of למען היה־לה ("in order to be for it") in 15; it is only slightly corrupted from this reading. We are further off in אח עשויה לברק ("alas; made for lightning") of verse 20, though the suspicion may not be avoided that this is merely another corrupt variant.

When it is recognized that verse 17 is commentary—and false commentary, as we shall see in a moment—and 18 is merely a corruption, then we are prepared for the fact that the third line is preserved in verse 19. In the absurd תכפל ("let it be doubled") we are to recognize תַּפֵּל ("throw down"); the similarity of kaph and pe as well as their succession in the first part of the line misled some scribe into creating this conflate form. That he was an early scribe is shown by the presence of the corruption in No. 967. But, further, שלישתה ("third") is certainly to be regarded as "massoretic";[4] חרב חלל ("sword of the slain") is omitted by No. 967 and the Latin Codex Sangallensis;[5] the closing words of the verse are some further conflation or commentary. And so the line stands out clear.

The fourth line is fairly well preserved in verse 21. We must, with LXX, ignore השימי ("set") as patently an incomplete dittograph of השמילי ("turn left"). There is uncertainty also about the verb. Perhaps we can do no better than accept the suggestion to read התחדי ("be sharpened"), though the Hithpa'el form is surprising; perhaps it is corrupted from an original Hiph'il, which would be normal. The complete poem then emerges; in view of the corrupt repetitions there is not material for more in these verses, so that we may feel somewhat confident that the following represents approximately the original:

חרב חרב הוחדה   מרוטה לטבח
נתתי אותה ביד־הורג   למען ההל ברק

הך כף אל־כף ותפל   חרב חללים
התחדי הימיני השמילי   אנה פניך מעדות

A sword! A sword! It is sharpened;
  it is polished for slaughter!.
I have put it in the hand of the killer
  to flash like lightning.

Smite, hand against hand; strike them down,
  O sword of carnage!
Slash with keen edge, right and left
  wherever you may turn.

We may afford to be less hesitant in this case about use of the word "poetry"; this is vigorous and effective writing. The theme and exegesis are apparent—Ezekiel's cryptic utterances are seldom of doubtful interpretation, notwithstanding the ancient commentators commonly misread them—it is the now familiar topic, the desolating advance of the Chaldeans: this will entail wholesale slaughter. The date of the oracle is not precisely indicated, but it was shortly before or some time during the siege.

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[4] See George Dahl, in Journal of Biblical Literature, LIII (1934), 382.

[5] See Johnson, Gehman, and Kase, *op. cit., ad loc.*

The striking of hand against hand is obviously the onslaught of battle; but the commentator misunderstood it as an act of mourning and so gave us his irrelevant remark in verse 17. One of the acute textual problems still remaining is 15b and the parallel in verse 18. The conjecture is appealing that in some part the words are "massoretic," but final solution escapes us.

The fourth section of the chapter, verses 23-31, certainly contains a genuine oracle; a prime question is of its limits. Contrary to general opinion we must consider verses 26-27 secondary. Their content is appropriate: they relate now well-known Babylonian practices of divination. But this means little for our question. Why should Ezekiel have been the only Jew to know of these? And we have already seen reason to believe that the activity of commenting on this book began soon after his time, when Babylonian practice was still a prime fact of contemporary culture. It is best also to consider verse 25 largely spurious. The Ammonites were not entailed in Zedekiah's rebellion; on the contrary, they had apparently some sort of agreement with Nebuchadrezzar in this period,[6] or in any case had no tenderness toward the Jews or inclination to associate with them in their foolhardy enterprise, as is abundantly testified by the notes in this very Book of Ezekiel. The verse is merely one of these frequent expressions of animosity toward Ammon; this Jew soothed his feelings by picturing Nebuchadrezzar on the point of attacking Rabbath-Ammon instead of Jerusalem. The poetic oracle in verse 24 is clear:

ואתה בן־אדם
שים־לך שנים דרכים   לבוא חרב מלך־בבל
ויד ברא בראש־דרך   אל יהודה ואל־ירושלם

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[6] II Kings 24:2.

And you, son of man,
Set for yourself two ways
for the sword of the king of Babylon
to come;
And carve[7] a sign at the fork of the road,
"To Judah and Jerusalem."

The purpose of the two ways is not, as the commentator in verse 25 held, to picture Nebuchadrezzar's uncertainty as to the object of his attack—he was not at all uncertain—but merely to represent vividly that he had come to the fork of the great road in northern Syria and was about to take incorrigibly the route toward Jerusalem. The time of the utterance is declared by its contents as just before the invasion.

Verse 28 is in part wishful thinking, long after the event, in part an interpretation of Zedekiah's fall: his capture declared his wickedness. This same thought is expanded by the commentator in verses 29-30, the closing phraseology of which is influenced by chapter 7. We shall note many evidences that these men were familiar with their Book of Ezekiel. Another writer in verses 31-32 carries on in the same mood but swings to a messianic hope. Unfortunately, there is nothing to indicate the period of any of these and still less their location. Verses 33-37 are an astonishing aggregation of allusions to passages in the Book of Ezekiel. We have seen that verse 33 quotes verses 14-15, and 34 and 36 allude to verse 16. But, as well, verse 34 quotes verse 30 and is reminiscent of 13:6. Verse 35 alludes to verses 8 and 10, possibly also to 16:3; while verses 36-37, with their faint suggestions of several passages, are really but an accumulation of typical commentators' phrases. The ascription of this section to a denunciation of the Ammonites, superficial at the first, grows increasingly remote; it is characteristic defamation of the writer's own people. Again we may remark this strange feature of the Book of Ezekiel: the severity, even bitterness, of many of its late commentators toward their fellow-Jews. They outstrip Ezekiel by far in their threats and denunciations.

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[7] It may be that ברא is but a dittography from the following בראש ; Origen marked it with an asterisk. But since he retained the verb later in the verse, his testimony is equivocal. If we should omit ברא , then the translation would be, "With a sign at the fork of the road."

VIII

CHAPTER 7

Chapter 7 impresses one at once as of unusual character. There are few if any of the repetitious marks of the commentator. The introductory formula recurs in part in verse 5; the trite editorial comment about knowing "that I am the Lord" is in 4, 9, and 27; similarly that about not pitying or sparing (cf. 5:11) is in 4 and 9; there is too much of תועבות ("abominations"). But all these are minor in comparison with the frequency of such features in passages we have already studied. The commentators left this chapter largely alone.

In its present form the chapter falls into two sections: verses 1-12 announce the coming of the day and arrival of the end; verses 13-27 describe the dejected and desperate situation of some unnamed group whom, however, we recognize to be the besieged garrison of Jerusalem. This latter section is obviously a poem of great vividness and intensity, though it is much marred by scribal errors and possibly by insertions. The first section also is poetry, though less striking than the other. The original relation between these two does not lie on the surface. Exegetes have taken diverse ways. But the conformity of the theme as well as the poetic form which will reveal itself on careful study leave no doubt that the first section is the beginning of the poem which describes the terrible condition of the beleaguered Jews; for them the day had come!

There will be no need to argue that verses 1-12 are a conflate recension of some relatively simple original. There is nothing novel in this view; it has been long held.[1] But we may find occasion to depart from previous results in the identification of the poem—one may not say, from the previous consensus, for there has been none. However, since we lack the guide which commentators' citations might have afforded, it will be best to avoid this problem for a moment, until we find some more obvious criteria for the nature of the poem. We turn to verses 14 ff.

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[1] See Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel*, *ad loc.*; also Bewer, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, XLV (1936), 223-31; but, long before either, R. Kraetschmar, *Das Buch Ezechiel übersetzt und erklärt* (1900), p. xiii. The different order of the first nine verses in LXX is evidence in the same direction.

Brief observation reveals the fact that this section falls into a number of parts each dealing with an aspect of the situation. Thus, verses 14-16 describe the situation in somewhat general terms; verses 17-18, the helplessness and despair of the inhabitants; verses 19-20, the uselessness of wealth; and verses 21-25, the imminent capture by the foreign foe; while verses 26-27 swing back in conclusion to the general terror and paralysis. It will be seen that these parts are of differing length; but it is apparent that verse 21-25, the longest of them, is considerably expanded with spurious additions; and the text of others is in obviously bad preservation. So it is a fair assumption that in these several parts we have the corrupted form of original poetic strophes, which then were presumably of equal length and identical form. A distinct advance in criticism will be made if it is possible to isolate any one of them with some degree of certainty.

We turn to verses 17-18 as one of the shorter of these parts, hence presumably less corrupted. And to our delight we find that the text raises no problems at all. Stil more striking, it falls neatly and obviously into three poeti lines, apparently the first two in 2:3 measure, and the last in 2:2. We go on into verses 19-20; here it is apparent tha the text has been supplemented. The explanation that the silver and gold will not be able to save them in the day of the Lord's wrath is a prosy intrusion. Perhaps the last clause of verse 19 is also added, though one could offer an appealing defense for it. In 20 we are obviously to read, with LXX, שָׂמֻהוּ ("they set it") and on the same evidence dele שקוצים ("detestable things") as an obvious gloss; the על־כן ("therefore") explanation at the end is likewise easily reco nized as secondary. And then we are happy to find that agai we have a triad of 3:3, 2:2:2 (or 3:3), and 3:3. Corroboration such as this gives us some confidence that we have discovered the original form of the poem; and we are justified in employing it, with care and caution, as a criterion of the rest of the chapter.

Let us take next verses 26-27 as the easier line of advance. One need not argue that 26b is editorial. In 27 we delete with LXX the two first words and read הנשיא ("the prince") for ונשיא ("and prince"). Then we need no demonstration that the closing phrase is not Ezekiel's. Apparently we are to follow the versions in reading כדרכם ("according to their ways") for מדרכם ("from their ways") and אתם ("them") ought to be pointed אִתָּם ("with them"). Then all is clear; again we have a triad of 3:3, 3:3, and 3:2.

Verses 14-16 are more difficult; and, while the assistance of LXX is of high value, it fails to clear the problem. We must feel grateful, however, that it delivers us from the doves in the valleys in 16b! And even their "mourning" becomes, by the obvious change suggested, rational and apropos: we read המית ("he killed"). The two last words of the verse, though supported by LXX, must go; they are carried over from verse 13. Then, still following LXX, we read imperative forms of the two verbs in 14 and delete the words after ("to war"); this is another case of conflation; the phrase is repeated from 12 and from 13 (where it is in corrupt form). The crux of our difficulty, however, is verse 15; for it gives more than we can use, and criteria for deletion are scant. The reading of LXX would give us an excellent 3:3 line in 15a. But its inclusion of ὁ πόλεμος must be due to erroneous division of the verses, unless 14a is worse preserved than appears, since no equivalent exists there for אין הלך למלחמה ("none going to war"). We must admit that 15a is appropriate to the situation; but it is dangerously like the theme of the three fates, which the commentators have adopted from Ezekiel's symbolic drama in 5:1-2. Further, the suitable content of 15a is all expressed in 15b. With less assurance than in the previous strophes, we may decide for this text. And then the triad is of 2:2:2, 3:3, and 2:2:2 lines.

In increasing difficulty we advance to verses 21-25.

Still, part at least of the original text is clear; for וחללוה ("and they will defile it") at the end of 21 is patently a gloss, and with its deletion the rest of the verse is acceptable. Now, surely verses 22-23 are commentary and conflation. The two first words of 25 are obviously a corrupt repetition of מקדשיהם ("their sanctuaries"); and the balance of the verse is commentary. But, on the other hand, verse 24 commends itself at once as appropriate and metrical; the one matter demanding attention is that מקדשיהם should obviously be pointed מִקְדְּשֵׁיהֶם .

Now at length we may make bold to attempt the first section of the chapter, verses 1-12. The high degree of certainty that triad structure was consistently maintained throughout the rest of the poem carries strong presumption of its originality here. But the bulk is enough for several triads. And, indeed, if we shall follow the example of previous students of the chapter, we must come out with that result, for they have with general consistency accepted the text roughly as it is and attempted to organize it into "oracles" or fragments, as the case may be, or even have set it up as one continuous poem. But, in the light of our study of chapters 24 and 21, it will be evident immediately that here, too, we deal with the phenomena of conflate recension. This is the significance of the tedious repetitions for which this section is notable among even the redundancies of the Book of Ezekiel. So our problem, as in previous similar passages, is to assess the conflate evidence so as to extract its multiple testimony to the original text.

The repetition of an introductory formula in verses 2 and 5 suggests the presence of two main recensions. And, indeed, closer observation shows this to be the case; though each is then further expanded with additional versions of phrases or verses.

The present text of the oracle begins with reduplicate announcement of the arrival of the end; this recurs, singly or in various repetitions, in 3, 6, 7, and, perhaps, in corrupted form in 10. Such testimony is conclusive; here is an original element. There is a similar repetition of the phrase "Behold the day." In varying forms, corrupt, fragmentary, or complete, it occurs in verses 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, and and 12. Now, in Ezekiel's style, an oracle frequently begins with the particle הנה ("Behold"); so it is probable that the first stichos is, "Behold the day; the end has come"; as, indeed, verse 10, though badly corrupted, yet clearly attests. The second stichos we find in 7a, "against you, O inhabitant of the land." And then the closing phrase of verse 2 reveals its character as a corruption of this. The balance of verse 7 will be recognized as conflation and corruption. So we go on with 8. Its opening word עתה ("now") is attested also in the first recension by the beginning of verse 3. But the similarities of these two verses go further; in both we have עליך ("against you") followed by אפי בך ("my wrath on you"). Then it is evident that ושלחתי ("I shall send") in verse 3 is an error for וכליתי ("I shall complete"). And so if we may delete מקרוב ("near") on the grounds of meter and as lacking support elsewhere, the full second line is well preserved in verse 8 and in corrupt form in 3a. Also the remainder of verse 8 is supported, more or less accurately by 3, 4, and 9b; the main divergence of these relates to the word ושפטתיך ("and I will judge you"). The weight of evidence seems to support the reading, "According to your ways will I give to you, and your abominations shall be in your midst." And with that the strophe is complete; as well, all our material is employed, except obvious additions that are of minor bulk. We may rest assured that the total of these verses contains no more of an original utterance than just these three lines!

But there remain yet verses 12-13, of which no account has been taken. They are of less extent than one triad. But the material is highly appropriate: in that terrible time of stress all usual commercial activities had stagnated. If we may regard either בא העת ("the time has come") or הגיע היום ("the day has arrived") as a genuine repetition, and not merely as another recension of the beginning of the poem, we recognize a good 2:2:2 line in 12a. Then the second line would begin as in 13. Apparently ישוב ("return") is a repetition and thus attests that the final clause of the verse followed immediately on the first ישיב. If we may consider that בעונו ("in his iniquity") is corrupt for באונו ("in his wealth"), חיתו ("his life") repeated from earlier in the verse, and יתחזקו a corruption for יחזיק ("grasp"), we would secure a good balancing stichos. The third line may have said something about "as long as they live" (or, "while they still live"), and "there is wrath against all their business"; but this seems a weak transition to the following strophe. We must admit that at this point everything is uncertain. But, giving the benefit of doubt to the possibility of a genuine strophe at this point, and allowing for some uncertainties as to details of wording, the entire poem would stand in approximately this form:

הנה היום   בא הקץ   אליך ישב הארץ
עתה אשפך חמתי עליך   וכליתי אפי בך
כדרכיך עליך אתן   ותועבותיך בתוכך תהיין

בא העת   הקונה אל־ישמח   והמוכר אל־יתאבל
כי המוכר אל־הממכר לא ישוב   ואיש באונו לא יחזיק
ועוד בחיים   ?   ?   חרון   ?

תקעו בתקוע   הכין הכל   ואין הלך למלחמה
אשר בשדה בחרב ימות   ואשר בעיר רעב ודבר יאכלנו
ופלטו פלטיהם   ויהיו על־ההרים   כלם המית

כל־ידים תרפינה   וכל־ברכים תלכנה מים
וחגרו שקים   וכסתה אותם פלצות
ואל כל־פנים בושה   ובכל־ראשיהם קרחה

כספם בחוצות ישליכו   וזהבם לנדה יהיה
נפשם לא ישבעו   ומעיהם לא ימלאו
וצבי עדיו לגאון שמהו   וצלמי תועבותיהם עשו בו

ונתתיו ביד־הזרים לבז   ולרשעי הארץ לשלל
והבאתי רעי גוים   וירשו את־בתיהם
והשבתי גאון עזם   ונחלו מקדשיהם

הוה על־הוה תבוא   ושמעה על־שמועה תהיה
הנשיא ילבש שממה   וידי עם־הארץ תבהלנה
כדרכם אעשה אתם   ובמשפטיהם אשפטם

Now is the day!
  The end has come
  upon you, inhabitant of the land.
Now will I pour out my wrath on you
  and will expend my anger upon you;
just as you have done I will requite you,
  and your abominations shall abide with
[you!

(The time has arrived!
Let not the buyer be glad
nor the seller be sorry;
for the seller will no more return to his
[goods
and no man will possess himself of his
[wealth.
And while they still live . . . . (?)
. . . . wrath. . . . .)

Blow ye the trumpet;
make all ready!
But none goes out to battle.
Those in the country die by the sword;
those in the city famine and pestilence
[devour.
Fugitives slip away,
they are out on the hills—
all of them are killed!

All hands hang limp,
all knees run with water.
They gird on sackcloth,
terror covers them;
on all faces there's dismay,
on all heads baldness.

Their silver they throw out,
their gold is as filth—
though their hunger is not sated
their stomachs not filled—
for gorgeous jewellry they had used it,
and their abominable images they had
made with it.

But I give it to foreigners as booty,
to the most wicked of the earth as
[spoil.
I have brought the scum of the nations:
these shall possess their homes;
I will bring to an end their boasted
[strength,
and these shall have their holy places
in heritage.

Disaster follows hard on disaster,
rumor on rumor ensues!
The prince is clothed in desolation,
and the soldiers are powerless,
[overwhelmed!
As they have done I will do to them
and their own practices I will mete
[out to them.

Here is the longest oracle from Ezekiel that we possess. Also it is the best poem. We have had occasion to remark the tawdry character of much of his metrical product. But let us now give full credit. This is a poem of finished form, of careful wording, and of intense earnestness, picturing vividly the black despair of the defeated garrison. While by no means to be ranked among the great achievements of the Hebrew literary genius, it is not unworthy of that tradition.

We have already remarked that the occasion of the poem is self-evident.[2] Equally its content calls for no exegesis. Herntrich's findings fully justify themselves here; this was written nowhere but in Jerusalem and certainly not more than a few days before Zedekiah made his ill-starred attempt to save himself by abandoning the city to the fate he had brought upon it. Whatever uncertainty may attach to the locale of other oracles, this, along with the cogent evidence of 6:12, demonstrates beyond any question Ezekiel's presence in Jerusalem during the siege and right through to its tragic conclusion. Then, as we saw from 11:15, he was numbered with the second deportation. One cannot avoid deep feelings of vicarious apprehension and suffering across all these ages as he reads these words out of that terrible moment in the life of Judah, which the formal account in II Kings, chapter 25, relates with bald objectivity, and even the more personal records of Jeremiah's experiences through the same trying time passes over with meager detail.

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[2] It will be unnecessary to comment on Gaster's opinion that the poem relates to "the mysteries" (Journal of Biblical Literature, LX [1941], 297-304). Equally, Bewer's view that reference is to "the final judgment" has missed the obvious point of the poem (op. cit., p. 226).

IX

CHAPTER 12

The chapter falls obviously into four sections, each ostensibly containing a genuine oracle; each, we are now prepared to believe, also has considerable secondary material. They are verses 1-16, 17-20, 21-25, and 26-28.

The first of these is familiar to every reader of the book, in part because of its remarkable "prophecy" of the very details of Zedekiah's flight from the city. However that may be, we recognize in verses 1-7 the features of conflate recension now well known to us. So our task presents itself as that of evaluating these diverse textual notes and of recovering the original poem, if poem it should prove to be. This original cannot go beyond verse 6, for verse 7 is an account of Ezekiel's having done as directed in the previous verses. How much of this latter comes from him it is impossible to say: possibly most of the verse, with deletion of only some expansive glosses. But, in any case, it is highly important for its textual evidence. In addition, the interpretations in verses 9 ff. must be studied for their similar value.

Verse 2 is spurious. This becomes probable in view of our conclusions as to a similar occurrence of the notion of the "rebellious house" in 24:3; it is rendered certain by its interruption of the normal formula of introduction. The content of the first stichos of the oracle is apparent; Ezekiel is to prepare his belongings to go into exile. These possessions are described in verse 3 as כלי גולה ("exile's outfit").[1] But when it is observed that וגלה ("and go into exile") is omitted by LXX and that the remaining phrase, כלי גולה יומם ("exile's outfit by day"), belongs a little later in the poem, as is attested by verses 4 and 7, then the evidence of verses 4 and 7 becomes conclusive as well that we are to read here simply כליך ("your belongings"). And since 3b is spurious—its content is inappropriate and as well is unsupported by the textual evidence of the following verses—the sequence of the passage indicates correctly that the second stichos is in 4*a*, which, as just now mentioned, is supported by 7. For the second line, the importance of verse 7 as textual evidence is high; it gives us a thread to follow through the confusions of 4*b*-6, which then are seen to consist of textual mistakes and repetitions, with also some additions incorporated from the interpretation in verses 8 f. The line instructs the prophet to dig through a wall and carry his things out on his shoulder. All is clear except for the rival claims of the words לעיניהם ("before their eyes"), בערב ("in the evening"), and בעלטה ("in gloom"); but decision on the conflicting evidence is not easy, nor can it in the end be certain. The tiresome repetition of the first of these words is one of the striking features of the passage; it occurs seven times in the five verses 3-7.[2] The second word occurs only twice, but the third occurs three times (including vs. 12). Now, if textual criticism were as simple as counting noses, all would be clear; we should accept לעיניהם . This, too, would be much easier for the exegesis, for, as will be pointed out presently, the other two words are difficult to explain. But exegesis must follow, not determine, textual considerations. And the frequent occurrences of לעיניהם are all discounted by the facts that the suffix lacks antecedent except in the spurious verse 2, and the word manifests no phrasal affinities whatever. Instead, it appears in all sorts of connections. A similar charg may be leveled against בערב ; but, on the other hand, its occurrence in verse 7, which seems well preserved, in part at least, is convincing. And for בעלטה verses 6 and 12 are mutually corroborative as to its relationship, though it has a different setting in 7; also a serious consideration is that the presence of this rare word[3] would be difficult to explain if it were not original.

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[1] For the phrase cf. Jer. 46:19, which was probably influenced by the present passage.

So the oracle emerges from our investigation in this form:

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[2] One of these (in vs. 4*b*) is omitted by LXX.

[3] It occurs only here and in Gen. 15:17 and is rare also in post-biblical Hebrew.

ואתה בן־אדם
עשה לך כליך   והוצאת ככלי גולה יומם
ובערב חתר־לך בקיר   על־כתף תשא בעלטה

And you, son of man:
Make ready your things!
By day bring them out like an
[exile's.
In the evening dig through the wall;
carry them on your shoulder through
the gloom.

The larger meaning of the symbolic drama is clear. Ezekiel portrays the fate of the people of Jerusalem. Soon they will gather their belongings to go into exile; the wall will be breached, then they will carry their bundles on their shoulders as they set out on the long, terrible journey. But the sequence of the action and the time notes are not so obvious. The best that can be done is to understand both the oracle and the record in verse 7 as meaning that Ezekiel gathered his few belongings and carried them out by day into the court of his house; then, when evening fell, he solemnly dug through the wall, dragged out his bundle, and, carrying it on his shoulder, set off in the gloom. To the objection that thus the first part of the drama would lack the publicity essential to its purpose it may be retorted: How much publicity would be possible for the breaching of his house wall in one of the narrow lanes of old Jerusalem? It may be that he provided a hand-picked audience[4] for the action within his house by taking a few acquaintances along and then confidently left all to the effectiveness of oriental gossip. But the time notes are still difficult. We can but conclude that the gloom of evening is to symbolize the mental state of the exiles;[5] and the previous action by day is timed merely to allow a sufficient period for the effectiveness of the drama.

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[4] Cf. Jer. 19:1; less appropriate is Isa. 8:2.

[5] Little help is afforded by the commentaries, for, as well known, they are as "false" as the ancient interpreter in vss. 12 ff. The suggestion that evening symbolizes the time when the captives would set out because of the heat of the oriental climate is plausible. But were the Babylonians so considerate of their prisoners?

The date of the oracle must be fixed at some time well advanced in the siege when the desperate nature of the situation had become apparent. It is notable, once again, that no reason is given for the oncoming disaster: the oracle contains no statement of moral or religious principles. But this is apparently implied, and we have seen brief statements elsewhere showing Ezekiel's attitude toward the religious issue precipitated by political developments.

In verses 8 ff. occurs an interpretation which we shall now recognize to be genuine. But, once more, the important problem is the point at which Ezekiel stopped and later commentators began. It is apparent that בית המרי ("rebellious house") is intruded, perhaps by the individual who inserted verse 2. But the parallel phrase, בית ישראל ("House of Israel"), is Ezekiel's usual appellative for his compatriot However, since Harford's study[6] no one will suppose that thus he referred to North Israel as against Judah. The rest of the verse is acceptable. In verse 10 it is apparent that the phrase "and the whole house of Israel among whom they are" is spurious; this is no description of Jerusalem, as it purports to be. But a matter of even greater importance is that הנשיא ("the prince") has no relevance to the sentence; it is patentl a corrupt dittograph of the following המשא ("the oracle"). The usual translation, "This oracle is about the prince," is a device of desperation, an effort to find sense where there is none. The Hebrew language is quite capable of expressing that thought in clear, unmistakable words, and the prophet Ezekiel, also, if he had wished to do so. Further, such translation makes the rest of the sentence difficult, if not actually un-Hebraic. But following the obvious course of deleting הנשיא all becomes simple and clear. The sentence says in idiomatic Hebrew, "This oracle is against Jerusalem," a statement which by its obvious accuracy carries its own validation; this, we have seen, is actually the theme of the oracle. The criticism of verse 11 is more difficult, and unfortunately we are still devoid of the assistance that papyrus No. 967 might offer, for it resumes in verse 12. There can be little dispute, however, that אמר ("say") is but a scribal repetition;

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[6] J. Battersby Harford, Studies in the Book of Ezekiel (1935), pp. 77-101.

and אני מופתכם ("I am a portent for you") is quite unlike Ezekiel. Whether or not we should retain כאשר עשיתי כן יעשה להם ("as I have done it shall be done to you") is more uncertain, for we saw that in 24:22 a similar expression commends itself as probably original. The needs of the case will be met, however, if we accept merely the two words בגולה ילכו ("into exile they shall go"); since בשבי ("into captivity") is clearly a gloss; and בגולה is the word used in the oracle. Then the interpretation takes this simple, but effective, compact form:

בן־אדם
הלא אמרו אליך   בית ישראל
מה אתה עשה
אמר אליהם
המשא הזה בירושלם   בגולה ישבו

Son of man:
Did they not say to you—
the House of Israel—
What are you doing?

Say to them,
This oracle is against Jerusalem:
into exile they shall go.

The coherence of the oracle and the interpretation, the characteristic lightness of the Ezekelian touch, the appropriateness of the thought to the circumstances as revealed in the text, even in its present corrupt form, all conduce forcibly to the conclusion that here we have the original approximately as Ezekiel uttered it.[7] But perhaps a little further argument of the position is desirable. Enough has been said about the introduction. The spurious character of verse 3b is evident from the fact that this "other place" has no further mention or significance in the oracle or its interpretation. But, as well, the obvious prose form of the half-verse is cogent of its secondary origin. We observe, then, the complete evaporation of Bertholet's device for getting Ezekiel to Babylonia. He did not go on this occasion to another place out in the hills of Judah, as Bertholet holds and there await the fall of the city; he could not have done so, for Jerusalem was close shut up by the Babylonians. He tells us himself that such efforts to slip through the lines (7:16) were futile. Moreover, the evidence of chapters 7 and 11:14 ff., borne out as it is by the cumulative testimony of passages yet to be studied, leaves not a doubt that Ezekiel remained in the city right through the siege and the final days of disaster. The spurious origin of 4b is apparent in its redundant character, in its slight content, and in the fact that verse 7, in giving a résumé of the oracle, fails to attest it. This latter source of evidence is still more important for verse 6. All these details about the covered face and its consequences are completely foreign to the nature of the oracle as attested in verse 7; it is clear that

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[7] It would greatly increase the bulk of this study, and to no purpose, if one were to attempt to answer the various devices followed by modern commentators in their efforts to expound Ezekiel. Enough has been said in "The Problem" as to the insufficiency of their criteria and the unsoundness of their methods. Little can then be expected of their detailed study. But it is interesting, if not diverting, to note their treatment of this oracle. We are not surprised that uniformly they take the entire passage as referring to Zedekiah. They analyze the text to greater or less extent, but in complete subjectivity, for they have no criteria. The result is chaos. Bertholet has recognized the conflation in vss. 1-6; but his solution of the problem in a theory of the union of an oracle about the people with one about Zedekiah is a typical confusion of genuine and spurious. Matthews

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rightly points out that the similarity of the "prediction" in vss. 12 ff. to Zedekiah's experiences disproves what it is commonly supposed to prove. But, nonetheless, he as well as the others considers that Zedekiah is "the centre of the stage." Hölscher, with one of those extremes to which his method leaves him liable, while recognizing that vss. 1-16 are heavily interpolated, even after deletion of the secondary material denies that the residue is Ezekiel's. Herntrich is satisfied to argue that vss. 1-11 are intelligible only on the grounds that they were uttered before 586 B.C.; apparently we must deduce that he recognizes a genuine element, but what it is remains vague. Cooke comes so close to an acceptable solution that we almost hold our breath in hopes he will stumble on it. He holds that the original is a symbolic drama of the fate of the people; but six years later Ezekiel wrote it down, altering it to harmonize with the intervening tragic events. It is amusing to find him unhesitatingly deleting vs. 10 as well as the first word of 11, but then accepting 12 ff. All this is eloquent of the charge already repeated that critics of the Book of Ezekiel have found no dependable criteria for identifying the genuine, nor have they developed a sound method of investigation.

they are inserted to harmonize with the spurious commentary in verse 12.

Moving on to the latter, it is apparent what has happened. The scribal error of inserting הנשיא ("the prince") in verse 10 has misled the commentator into believing that the oracle was concerned with the fate of Zedekiah. But Ezekiel himself had stated specifically the reverse: the oracle is against Jerusalem. A revealing feature of the book has been its false commentary; this case is specially notable, since even though Ezekiel himself told what he meant he did not preclude misinterpretation. Ancient and modern commentators alike follow the false lead, though Matthews has well pointed out that the given features are not true to Zedekiah's experience at all. But such trifles will not stop false exegesis.[8] In verse 14 the commentator reveals his familiarity with chapter 5; it is one of many evidences that these men knew well their Book of Ezekiel. Verse 15 is from the Diaspora, as will be readily recognized, and verse 16 is the work of our old acquaintance, the "shamed" commentator.

Verses 17-20 are a duplicate of chapter 4, verses 16-17, as noted at that point. They are an independent oracle. Indeed, it appears that in brief compass we have in these verses both an enacted symbol and its interpretation by Ezekiel himself. The poetic form of the utterance in verse 18 is apparent; it is a single 3:3 line. The only textual question is in regard to the adverbial phrases. Invoking the testimony of verse 19 and of 4:16, it is possible that the original was:

בןאדם
לחמך בדאגה תאכל   ומימיך בשממון תשתה

Son of man:
Your bread you shall eat with anxiety,
and water you shall drink in consternation.

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[8] The last four words of verse 12 are not supported by papyrus No. 967: one more evidence that the grammatical and logical difficulties of this book are due to expanders of one sort or another.

Verse 19 has conflate address: to the people of the land and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who are described further as upon (?) the land of Israel (unless we are to consider the latter a third address). It seems probable that Cooke and Bertholet are correct in retaining only the mention of the people of the land and regarding the other phrase as a gloss.[9] Certainly the normal form of introductions to oracles would favor this course. And it would appear that the qualification "upon the land of Israel" was inserted by some editor who accepted the theory that Ezekiel was at this time in Babylonia, hence should distinguish the inhabitants of Jerusalem who had gone into exile from those who yet remained in the homeland. However, the consequences of the deletion are not so clear, whether we should change the suffixes in the oracle to second person, as Bertholet does, or should with Cooke understand אל־עם הארץ as equivalent to "concerning the people of the land." But the total import of the matter is slight. More significant is to recognize that these people were in Jerusalem, the yeomanry of Israel gathered into the city for its protection and their own, as is clearly shown by 7:27. Bertholet's effort to draw support from this verse for his theory that Ezekiel had left the city (vs. 3) is completely futile.

Verses 19b and 20 have the familiar marks of commentary, the latter influenced by 6:6.

In verses 21 ff. Ezekiel takes his inspiration from a popular proverb which he feels called upon to refute. It will be obvious that at verse 24 we merge into commentary; its relations to chapter 13, verses 6 ff., will become apparent on examination of the latter. The major textual question of 21-23 is the word ודבר ("and the word of") at the end of 23. We should expect here a verb balancing ואבד ("and fails") in the proverb in 22. The commentary in 24-25 uses עשה ("do") in this connection, but it is difficult to believe that this was the original of דבר. It is possible that the text is correct; it is supported by LXX, even No. 967. If one were to indulge a guess, ובא ("and shall come") might be possible; but for lack of evidence it is best to leave matters as they are. The passage would set up, then, in this fashion:

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[9] It is tempting to retain this latter phrase and translate, "with reference to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." The oracle then would become a threat against the influential classes in the city who apparently had misused their social advantages during the siege to exploit the ignorant peasantry shut up in the city. And we should recall that Jeremiah found occasion to reprove these same well-to-do folk for a similar offense at this very time (Jer. 34:8 ff.). Addressing the exploited peasants, Ezekial then threatens retribution upon their selfish fellow-citizens. However, all this comes to grief on the fact that אמר ל in the genuine Ezekiel commonly means to speak to; there is only one clear case of its meaning to speak of (viz., 21:5). Notwithstanding that the course advocated by Cooke and Bertholet involves further tampering with the text (as noted below), no convincing alternative offers itself.

בן־אדם
מה־המשל הזה לכם   על־אדמת ישראל
לאמר
יארכו הימים   ואבד כל־חזון
לכן אמר אליהם כה אמר יהוה
השבתי את־המשל הזה   לא ימשלו אותו עוד בישראל
כי־אם דבר אליהם
קרבו הימים ודבר כל־חזון

Son of man,
What is this proverb you use
against[10] the land of Israel,

saying,
The days lengthen
and every vision fails?
Therefore say to them, Thus says the Lord:
I bring to an end this proverb;
no more shall they use it in Israel.
But speak to them,
The days are near,
and the content of every vision.

The passage is of great interest as unquestionably an oracle of comfort, hence unique among those as yet studied.

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[10] This is a common meaning of the preposition על when used in connection with sayings in the Book of Ezekiel; e.g., 6:2; 13:17; 21:7; 25:2; 28:21; 29:2; 35:2; and 28:2 (some of these emended from אל in accordance with LXX). If it were required in the present passage to take על in its normal sense of upon, then we should apparently be compelled to date the oracle in the reign of Zedekiah and perhaps to understand it as a threat, less probable though this is.

But the time and circumstances are undetermined. It is apparent that it came out of a period of deferred hope, with resultant perplexities of faith. With these Ezekiel shows himself sympathetic, undertaking to meet them in a constructive spirit. It is difficult in the extreme to attribute this mood to his ministry during the years of Zedekiah's reign, when on the contrary he reveals himself as almost consistently denunciatory. There seems every reason to accept a date after 586, and evidently long after, for the people m must have lived through the first stunning effects of the disaster, have revived their faith in the Lord, but by long waiting were now falling into despair. Nothing is indicated of Ezekiel's location at this time, hence his auditors are likewise indefinite. But our results in 11:14-15 lead us to postulate that he was now "among the captives by the river Chebar."

The basic fact in the criticism of verses 26-28 is their omission by papyrus No. 967. Yet the implication of this fact is not obvious. It may be that the practical identity of the last six words of verses 25 and 28 misled the scribe. While the content is closely similar to that of the preceding oracle, this, as already commented, is no bar to genuineness; preachers and teachers commonly repeat their ideas in closely similar words. It is best to give the balance of doubt to tradition and concede here a genuine oracle:

בן־אדם
הנה בית ישראל אמרים   החזון אשר־הוא חזה
לימים רבים   ולעתים רחוקים הוא נבא

Son of man,
  Behold the House of Israel are
                  [saying
    the vision which he sees:
  it is for distant days;
    and for remote times is he
                [prophesying.

The character of the prophet's utterance to which reference is made, is undefined, whether threat or promise; and then the attitude of the people is likewise of two opposite possibilities. But since his oracles during the reign of Zedekiah were commonly concerned with the approaching fall of Jerusalem, which it would be difficult to relate to distant times, and since it is improbable that his compatriots would derive comfort from reasoning that national punishment, thought inevitable, was remote, it is altogether best to understand the present oracle as referring to prophecies of promise. These, then, the people rejected is discouragement as probably true but too remote to be of help. The reasoning adduced for the dating of verses 21-23 is applicable here equally; these verses likewise must have arisen long after the tragedy of 586 B.C. Further, a notable feature is their testimony that in this later period of his ministry Ezekiel was commonly reputed as a prophet of hope, just as tradition has held. In keeping with this, his reply to the present charge of his fellow-exiles is a bald assurance of prompt fulfilment.

X

CHAPTER 17

Like chapter 7 and several others in the book, this is of a single theme. But, unlike chapter 7, it has the typical marks of commentators' additions. The introductory formula in verse 9, together with the content of this and the following verses, indicates that the oracle did not extend beyond verse 8. But the commentary is highly composite. A major division comes at verse 22; but the section, 9-21, is also of diverse origins. After the comments in verses 9-10, verse 11 introduces what purports to be a genuine interpretation. This can go no further than verse 15; then a prosy commentary is intruded, and at verse 19 another that makes some pretense of being in verse.

The oracle is presented as a "riddle," a highly appropriate title for one of the most difficult passages in the entire book! Notwithstanding its wealth of ancient interpretation, it has remained a riddle to this day. What did Ezekiel actually say? And what, then, did he mean? But at least all will agree that, whether or not a riddle, the passage is a phenomenon; for what a horticultural monstrosity it sets before us! A twig from the top of a cedar of Lebanon is carried to a fertile field, where it grows into a willow (if that be the meaning of צפצפה), then suddenly in some unexplained way it is a fruitful vine, with boughs and branches But the end is not yet; still greater marvels await us: this vine displays the power to direct its roots toward a great eagle, apparently in full flight.[1] Mere mortals raise their hands in salute, but this vine waves its roots aloft! And if one be captious toward this interpretation, how does it ease matters if we understand that the vine pushed its roots underground toward the eagle? Did the eagle then sit in one place for weeks or months while the vine roots grew toward him?

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[1] Cf. Ps. 80:8 ff. But in this case the vine is merely like a cedar.

But, after we have had our fun, we grant freely that Ezekiel is not the butt of the jest. He never wrote anything so absurd. The text is in very bad condition. What connection has the "seed of the land" (vs. 5) with the cedar shoot? And if none, and thus the horticultural marvel is reduced by one degree, then why is the cedar shoot introduced at all? We note, too, the near-identity of the last words of verse 3 with the beginning of verse 5. And verse 8 comes in as an afterclap; the iniquity of turning toward the eagle was completed in verse 7, but here we are told of the planting of the vine. Does not the similarity to 5 imply that this is nothing but another recension? Moreover, the presence of a second eagle is not in the Hebrew text, which says in verse 7 that "there was *an* eagle . . . ."; it is by a characteristic confusion of consonants that LXX has given us "another" eagle. Further, the entire action relevant to this eagle depends on the dubious word כפנה ,[2] for the balance of the verse certainly relates reflexive action. The conclusion must be that there was no second eagle at all! So far as I have been able to determine, no critic, ancient or modern, except Louise Pettibone Smith, alone,[3] has detected this situation. Yet fact is incorrigible; we have no alternative but thus to fly in the fact of almost unanimous scholarship. The passage gives us not two episodes, with two "great eagles," but simply and purely a conflate and corrupt text. Verse 8 *is* a duplicate of verse 5; and verse 7 is another recension of verses 3-4.

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[2] This is true also of the statement relative to the roots in 6*b*: they were under itself, not under the eagle; however, the turning of the branches was apparently toward the eagle. But when it is observed that the two principal verbs relevant to the branches and the roots are פנה ("turn") and שלח ("send") and that vs. 7 reverses the usage of 6 in employing the latter with דליות ("branches"), then we are in a position to solve the puzzle of the word כפנה. The equation shows that it is intended for some form of the verb פנה; we might regard it as the preposition with a slightly corrupted form of the infinitive construct, and so construe: "when it turned its roots toward him, then it sent forth branches." It seems more probable, however, that kaph is but a corrupt dittograph of pe; we should read the perfect of the verb; it will be recalled that a comparable confusion of the two consonants was encountered in 21:19.

[3] "The Eagles of Ezekiel 17," *JBL*, LVIII (1939), 43-50.

So here we possess our now familiar resources of conflate text. And fortunately in this chapter the commentators' notes are also unusually full and helpful. So we approach with some boldness the task of uncovering, if possible, the original text.

Another notable step forward will be made when, invoking this latter assistance, specifically verse 22, we recognize that, like the eagles, the plants also reduce to one. The "riddle" is about a cedar shoot. And we shall not go far wrong if we accept the first line of the poem as in 3a, but deleting ארך האבר ("long of pinions") as a gloss. The reading here is slightly better on the grounds of meter than the alternate in verse 7; however, the variants מלא הנוצה ("full of plumage") or ורב נוצה ("and great of plumage") are of little consequence. The following words in verse 3 are also glossator's expansion; and Lebanon is not attested by any other of our rich textual sources in the chapter; clearly it came in through suggestion from the following ארז ("cedar" Then the second line begins with the present reading at the end of verse 3 and beginning of 4, of which latter we possess a variant in 5a; and also the commentator in verse 22 has quoted the entire line though changing the person of the verbs to suit his context.[4] The agreement of these two variants indicates that we are to read a partitive construction i place of the simple accusative found in verse 3. In addition to this highly important evidence, the interpretation in verses 12-13 provides support of some words.

The third line, then, we should expect in the remainder of verse 4. It is metrical and balanced; further, the initial verb is supported by verses 12-13, and, too, the thought might be appropriate, in so far as the uncertainties of exegesis at this moment permit one to judge. But against these considerations we must weigh the fact that this idea of conveyance to Canaan and planting in a commercial city is devoid of corroboration anywhere in the rich textual sources provided within the chapter. Rather, there are several references, of varying sorts, to the growth of the transplanted shoot in a fertile and well-watered plot. Verse 23a, it is true, puts it in "the mountain of the height of Israel," which, while logically close to "the land of Canaan," is remote textually and is apparently but a corruption (and expansion) of "many waters." On the whole, it seems best to regard 4b and c as an interpretative intrusion, but whether or not a correct interpretation we must leave until we attempt the problem of exegesis.

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[4] As well, vs. 22 has received certain expansions; the testimony of LXX supports the deletion of הרמה ונתתי ("high; and I gave"); רך ("tender") also came in spuriously as a gloss or a textual error.

Then the sequence of the passage, as also of 22-23, indicates the second and third stichoi of 5 as the next possible material in which to find more of the original oracle. But קח ("take") is to be ignored, in accord with the testimony of LXX; it is clearly a dittograph of the first word in the verse but is valuable as an index of the devious textual history of the chapter. Also the end of the verse is corrupted; for the original we turn to verse 8 and to the commentaries in verses 10 and 23, which agree on the verb שתל ("plant"), though with the support of the latter verse we read it with a suffix. And this, then, clarifies the present text, which appears as a corruption through metathesis and confusion from this same verb, but perhaps in some way influenced as well by שפלת ("low") in verse 6. The thought in this recovered line provides in turn the explanation of the several references to the watered garden beds or, by converse, to the drying-up of the plant; they are but expansive comments on the idea of the fertile planting of the cedar shoot.

Again textual sequence gives us our clue; the fourth line is clearly attested by 8b and 23, though פרי ("fruit") must be corrected on the testimony of 6c to פארת ("boughs"); a cedar does not bear fruit! The order of the two first verbs in verse 23 is the reverse of that in 8; the point is minor, but since the commentator has shown himself an excellent guide, probably we should give him the benefit of such doubt as exists. However, verse 8 is apparently superior in reading infinitive forms, an opinion supported also by the commentary in verse 14; perhaps this is the significance, too, of the strange reading משאות near the end of verse 9. And certainly we must accept the reading of 23, ארז אדיר ("majestic cedar") instead of גפן אדרת ("majestic vine"), as in 8. In addition to the logical absurdity of the introduction of this latter plant, as noted above, it is to be observed that it is nowhere attested outside these verses 6-8; all the interpreters and expanders otherwise deal with only a single plant. Clearly, the vine has been introduced spuriously through some error of text or exegesis.

It is clear that the testimony of the commentator in verses 22-23a carries the oracle no further; 23c and 24 run off into ideas that have no echo elsewhere in the chapter and, besides, are trite phrases such as we have no basis for attributing to Ezekiel. The evidence of 12 ff., too, in so far as it is relevant to the content of the oracle, stops at the same point. Verses 9 and 10, whatever their real nature, certainly do not attest further content in the oracle proper. In the total of these verses there remains, then, after the four lines already isolated, only a confused mass relevant to sprouting and growing branches and roots and becoming a low vine or a proud one. Summing up all available testimony, it becomes practically certain, then, that in these four lines we have taken account of all the genuine material. And the poem emerges thus:

הנשר הגדול   גדול הכנפים   מלא הנוצה
ויקח מצמרת הארז   מראש יניקותיו קטף
ויתנהו בשדה זרע   על־מים רבים שתלו
לשאת ענף   לעשות פארת   להיות לארז אדיר

The great eagle!
his wings were wide,
his plumage rich!
He took one of the cedar's tips,
the best of its twigs he
[plucked off.

And he set it in a fertile field,
by abundant waters he planted it,
to bring forth boughs,
to grow branches,
to become a majestic cedar.

But what does it mean? That the cedar twig is Israel will suggest itself as probable; this is the normal symbolism of the cedar of Lebanon in the Old Testament. In any case, the ancient commentators, and the modern, following them, agree on this exegesis. But, then, what of the eagle? And where was the cedar transplanted?

Two views suggest themselves. The riddle may portray the early history of Israel; the Lord took the Amorite ancestors of Israel and planted them in Canaan, there to grow into a great nation. This is the interpretation of the commentator in verses 22 ff. and is implied by verse 4b-c as well. Moreover, it provides the simplest explanation of the adjective אדיר. Yet it seems improbable. True, chapter 16 takes us back to this same pristine period, but still its parallel is not exact. Further, notwithstanding verses 22 ff. and many poetic allusions to the Lord's protecting wings, it was a very bold figure for a Jew to represent his God as an eagle. The other interpretation is that the eagle is Nebuchadrezzar, and the land Babylonia. The symbolism is appropriate, and the description of the place of planting as a fertile field by abundant waters fits Babylonia better than Palestine. The riddle would then relate to the captivity. And this is the view presented in the composite text of verses 12-21. On the whole, this commends itself as the most probable interpretation. It was highly apropos for Ezekiel to have thus figured the revolutionary changes of his time. And the purport of the symbol would be that the deportation to Babylonia was not so disastrous as some may have thought. Babylonia was a fruitful soil, where the Jews could grow and thrive and even rebuild their national life. We noted the similarity of chapter 15 to an utterance of Jeremiah. Here we meet another close parallel. This riddle is evidently teaching, in its own thought-provoking way, what Jeremiah had said in precise terms in his famous letter to the exiles, "Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens and eat the fruit of them. Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters . . . . and be not diminished. And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive . . . . " (Jer. 29:5 ff.). But, though the time and place of Jeremiah's utterance are known, those of Ezekiel's constitute a problem.

But now let us explore the ancient interpretation in verses 11 ff., close to which our independent investigation has brought us. We are arrested immediately by the presence of the genuine formula, ויהי דבר יהוה אלי לאמר ("and the word of the Lord came to me saying"), and of the imperative אמר, ("say"), with which, as we have seen, Ezekiel on occasion introduced his response to the people's inquiries. It is of some significance, too, that LXX inserted here *υἱὲ ἀνθρώπου.* And then, too, the word הנה ("Behold"), with which the interpretation begins, is, we recall, a frequent introductory particle with Ezekiel. All this prompts the belief that some genuine element is contained in these verses. However, the situation is confused, for certainly the interpretation is not genuine in toto. Zedekiah's broken oath and its consequences, in verses 13 and 15 ff., is patently false commentary. The oracle, as we have seen, has nothing of this; indeed, is quite far from it; the same is true of the excellent citation in verses 22-23. Evidently, it came in as commentary on the corrupt and conflate text of the oracle which we now possess and hence is relatively late. Besides, we have seen the appeal which this sort of idea held for the expanders: they seized upon it in the similar case of chapter 12. But the imperative אמר occurs as well in verse 9 and actually twice in verse 12, in one of which it is followed by the very dubious phrase בית המרי ("rebellious house"). Besides, Ezekiel is represented as himself raising the question of the interpretation, an action quite different from his course hitherto. Still we recall once more the varying practice of Jesus in this regard and conclude that we may not press the point. But, in any case, there are enough suspicious features to permit the conclusion that the text is in some disorder. Is it possible that the questions in verse 9 preserve some reminiscence of an original inquiry by the people to which then Ezekiel replied, following his usual course, in verses 11 ff.? However this may be, we can recognize in verse 12 unmistakable features of a genuine utterance, which, following the form and wording of the oracle, we isolate thus:

הנה־בָא מלך־בבל ירושלם   ויקח את־מלכה ואת־שריה   ויבא אותם אליו בבלה

> Behold, the king of Babylon came to
> [Jerusalem
> and took its king and its princes
> and brought them to himself to Babylon.

It cannot have gone beyond this, for neither לשמר את־בריתו לעמדה ("to keep his agreement to fulfil it") nor לבלתי התנשא ("not to raise itself") parallels the oracle in the way that Ezekiel's interpretations commonly do. And his genuine utterances are not infrequently a single tristich line, as here. Further, the content of verses 13 and 15 ff. is, as already remarked, obviously spurious. A tempting additional stichos might be taken from 14a, thus making of the interpretation a distich couplet instead of a tristich. But to pick this mere fragment out of a spurious context after the intervention of the foreign material in verse 13 is reminiscent of the too common practice of making Hebrew poetry rather than finding it. Also this stichos would raise an almost impossible problem for exegesis: Why should Ezekiel have immediately reversed his estimate of the cedar shoot in this fashion, making it menial instead of majestic? True, the word שפלה is found in verse 6 also, and there is no reason to doubt that the two occurrences are related. But this provides no ground for reversing the decision that both are spurious.

Now we possess additional resources for dating the oracle. The genuine interpretation must refer to Jehoiachin's, not Zedekiah's, captivity. But it has never been doubted that verse 12 speaks of Jehoiachin; it is only as "seed of the kingdom" succeeding Jehoiachin, that Zedekiah comes into our text. But the falsity of this interpretation is evident, since the oracle is devoid of prototypes of two such individuals, unless, as mentioned above, one is willing to accept the absurdity of having the cedar twig transform itself through several metamorphoses finally into a fruitful vine, or, unless, on the other hand, one make a fresh start with the "seed of the land" (vs. 5) and so leave the original cedar shoot quite devoid of relevance. Now it is possible that after the disaster of 586 B.C. Ezekiel should have thus recounted the beginning of the captivity, but probabilities are heavily against this. We may with some confidence conclude that the similarity to Jeremiah's letter mentioned above carries this step further that Ezekiel's oracle was uttered about the same time. The date is evidently soon after Jehoiachin's captivity, or, in other terms, early in the reign of Zedekiah.

But, then, what is the purport of the oracle? What motives impelled Ezekiel to utter it? Jeremiah's encouraging letter is intelligible by virtue of the fact that he sent it to the exiles. For the people of Jerusalem he held only contempt: they were "very bad figs." Ezekiel shared this opinion. The small measure of hope expressed in the present oracle can scarcely have been directed to these folk whom he consistently threatened. But, unfortunately, we have not a fragment of evidence that he further emulated Jeremiah in sending his message likewise to Babylonia. But this theory would smooth out all difficulties. And with that we must leave it. The oracle recounts in allegoric terms the first deportation and with characteristic light touch suggests hope in the general gloom. The exiled Jews will maintain their identity and actually rebuild a national life of some dignity: they will become a "majestic cedar." It is notable, however, that his interpretation, delivered we must believe to his compatriots in Jerusalem, lacks this latter thought; Ezekiel merely comments that the oracle relates the deportation. He seems unwilling to explain to them, in their unrepentant self-assurance, that he was mildly optimistic as to the future of the nation.

XI

CHAPTER 19

Once again we find a chapter almost devoid of commentators' intrusions. And, superficially at least, it is of united theme, for both sections begin with the announcement that "your mother" was of such and such character, and both seem concerned with kings of Judah. Fortunately, there is no debate as to the form of the chapter; it has long been recognized as one of the poetic passages of the Book of Ezekiel. The meter is obviously 3:2; besides, we are specifically told so in the dual recension of the colophon. However, for the moment we must center attention on the first section of the chapter, verses 1-9; later we can attempt the problem of its relation to verses 10-14.

The charming little elegy falls obviously into two subsections: verses 2-4 relate the career of the first lion cub and verses 5-9 that of the second. The second, then, is given greater space; in poetic terms the first has three couplets, but the second five. There is a striking similarity, even repetition, in the language of these subsections, though with its larger bulk the second obviously does not follow the first slavishly. Coming direct from the two eagles of chapter 17 and our conclusion that actually there was originally only one, the question here obtrudes itself whether this also is a case of duplicate recension. Did the mother-lioness actually rear and train only one whelp? But the text of the present passage is clearly in better preservation than that of chapter 17, except for the opening words of verse 7, where corruption is apparent; it has, too, none of the absurdities that stare us in the face there. And the two cubs are portrayed with clarity and character; their careers stand out with individuality. There is no reason to doubt that the poem is well preserved; it had originally two cubs. The similarities of wording are the poet's device of literary balance.

A few textual matters demand attention. We need not delay to argue for a Hiph'il form at the beginning of verse 4. Likewise, the opening words of verse 7, just now mentioned, should probably be emended to וירע ארמנותיו ("and he smashed their citadels"), taking רעע as an Aramaized equivalent of רצץ (cf. Ps. 2:9). In verse 9 there is certainly an addition, as most students of the chapter recognize; the line is metrically overloaded. And the spurious material must be אל־מלך בבל יבאהו ("they bring him to the king of Babylon"), not ויבאהו במצדות ("and brought him into a fortress"), as, once more, is shown by the meter, for only thus can we maintain the 3:2 measure. But, though these points are generally conceded, few, if any, critics have observed the significance of this deletion; for, with it, mention of the king of Babylon disappears from the chapter. In any case, this has occasioned no serious disturbance of thought; for practically everyone has gone on the assumption that the chapter recounts the fate, first of Jehoahaz, and then of either Jehoiakim, Jehoiakin, or Zedekiah. Indeed, this interpretation has appeared obvious; verse 4 tells us clearly that the first cub was carried captive to Egypt. Who can this have been but Jehoahaz? The uncertainty as to the second is then a bagatelle not deserving the trouble of argument. True, there must arise some uneasiness as to this line of identification. Were these princelings of such might that even an enthusiastic poet might fairly describe them as man-eating lions, the second, in particular, as desolating lands far and wide, and both finally subdued only through the co-operation of several peoples. It is all very well to claim "poetic license," but this becomes an orgy of imagination! Perhaps the passage of time could throw a glamour over the memory of three of the most effete princes that ever sat on the throne in Jerusalem; but, even so, one must feel impelled to comment of the author, "Methinks he doth protest too much!" Torrey is aware of the difficulty and invokes these considerations cogently against Jehoiachin.[1] But, then, how much has he bettered his position? For one must be overgenerous in his practice of the blind eye if he will make Jehoiakim a man-eating lion terrifying and devastating all his neighborhood. It is astonishing that Torrey, with his well-known thesis of the origin of the book, did not recognize the material for his purpose that lay here. But, as far as I know, no one save Berry has noticed that the chapter is late.[2]

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[1] Pseudo-Ezekiel, p. 78.

The king of Babylon is gone from the poem. Then why is Egypt here? Verse 4 is the parallel to verses 8-9; in it we have the fate of the first cub related with much of the same phrasing as in the latter passage. Yet the text of verse 4 diverges further than its more brief content would require. The beginning of the second line is short; and, too, the line relates that the cub was brought with hooks to Egypt, whereas the parallel in good metrical form tells that the other cub was put with hooks into a cage. One's suspicions rise that some corruption has taken place. But more significant for our purpose is the fact that the disappearance of the second cub in a hunters' fastness (apparently that is the meaning of מצדות, though its significance here is that it can also mean fortress) is paralleled in verse 4 by the statement that they brought him with hooks to Egypt. Briefly, מצרים ("Egypt") parallels מצדות. Then all becomes clear. This is no parallel at all but a corruption. The literary balance practiced by the author in his use of identical phrases to describe the career and fate of the two cubs leaves it practically certain that verse 4 did not take the cub to Egypt but, as in verse 9, into a fortress. Then אל ארץ ("to the land") has been inserted after this scribal error took place; so it is hopeless to seek the original behind it. Also, to undertake further emendation of the verse would lead to conjecture. So, with this incomplete result, we must drop the problem, concluding only that the first cub, just as the second, was assailed by the surrounding peoples, was taken in a pit, and disappeared in a fortress.

So all basis for postulating Jehoahaz is gone. And now we recognize the significance of the disappearance of the king of Babylon from the poem; for Jehoiakim and the others are gone as well. And there is nothing specific in all the poem to indicate about whom this brief dirge was written, but only the general features of the passage. Apparently, the two were brothers, though admittedly it is uncertain whether the poem merely portrays Judah figuratively as the mother of rulers. No claim is advanced that they assumed the title of king, but this may signify nothing. In any case, both were in some way leaders and representatives of their people. Both were strong rulers, and under them Judah was powerful, indeed aggressive. The second appears to have surpassed the other, whom it seems he immediately succeeded, and then carried on successful war against neighboring states. But both roused the animosity of these neighbors; they were attacked by some sort of alliance. Both were captured, and each alike disappeared in a fortress.

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[2] G. R. Berry, "The Composition of the Book of Ezekiel," _Journal of Biblical Literature_, LVIII (1939), 168-75.

Now in the total of Jewish history there are two men, and two only, whom this description fits. They are Jonathan and Simon. And then with some astonishment we realize how aptly it does fit them. They, indeed, were lions who learned to catch men; their successes were such as to warrant the poetic description that they terrified the land with their growling[3] and smashed castles and desolated cities. They excited the enmity of the non-jewish peoples. And both disappeared from history, actually just as related here, in fortresses. The close conformity of the poetic description to the historic facts leaves no escape from the conclusion that here we have the actual interpretation. The poem was written, apparently in Judah, probably soon after 135 B.C. Obviously, it is not Ezekiel's at all. And now we may note that it does not claim to be so; it lacks the authentic introduction. Further, the presence of the word מדינות ("provinces") assumes significance as mildly corroborating this conclusion; for, while it occurs in II Kings 20:14, 15, 17, 19, it is otherwise a late word in the Old Testament.

But doubtless some will feel grave misgivings toward dating a chapter of the Book of Ezekiel so late. However, even if there were a solid basis for assuming that the prophetic canon was strictly closed by the time commonly deduced from the evidence of Jesus ben Sirach, it would already have been called in serious question by the evidence of papyrus No. 967 as to the origin of chapter 36 which we surveyed some time ago. The Book of Ezekiel was receiving accretions to a very late date. But still this very papyrus No. 967 complicates the issue in chapter 19; for, after a break where about a chapter and a half is lost, it resumes in 19:12.[4] It is a reasonable presumption that the entire chapter was originally contained in the papyrus. If, then, the papyrus is taken as a reasonably reliable index of the original Septuagint, does this not carry back the origin of the chapter prior to 135 B.C.? But actually such reasoning would beg the question at two points. We do not know how far this or any other good manuscript may attest the original Septuagint. And, further, we do not know when the Greek translation of the prophets, specifically of the Book of Ezekiel, was made. So we are free to accept the internal evidence of this chapter and recognize in verses 1-9 a dirge on the untimely ends of Jonathan and Simon.

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[3] Hedwig Jahnow, *Das Hebraische Leichenlied im Rahmen Völkerdichtung* ("Beiträge zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft," Vol. XXXVI) discusses this chapter (pp. 19
210), accepting it as genuine, but notes (p. 205) the comparison, in I Macc. 3:4, of Judas to a lion.

The text of verses 10-14 is not so well preserved. Reminiscences of various passages in the Book of Ezekiel are so evident that one becomes suspicious of serious glossing. Verse 10_b_ is like 17:8; 11_b_ and _c_ is reminiscent of 31:3; the last two words of 12 are surely copied from chapter 15; there is a suggestion of this in 14_a_ also but still more of 5:4_b_. It does not follow that all these relationships signify late intrusion into the text rather than a late origin of the poem as a whole; but some certainly do. Verse 14_a_, for example, is scarcely logical; when the vine has been planted in the desert, it is a mixing of figures to have fire from its notable branch burn up its branches and fruit--what fruit would it have in that situation? Moreover, this branch was itself burned up in verse 11. But, further, there is some reason to believe that originally the poem was in couplet structure--unless the expansion has gone further than we are prone to believe. Thus, verse 10 is complete in itself as a description of the happily placed vine. In verse 11 we should read, with verse 14, מטה עז שבט למשל[5] ("a strong branch, a scepter for rule"), and apparently delete על, with LXX, and וירא בגבהו ("and it was seen in its height") as an unpoetic gloss on ותגבה ("and it grew high"); then the verse resolves itself into a couplet, descriptive of the rulers' scepter. In verse 12 criticism is even less certain; but, if we are correct in seeing couplets elsewhere in the poem, certainly this must also be one. What, then, is the excessive element it is difficult to say; though probably the second line should go out. The decision is not completely free of arbitrariness, but still the line appears inferior to the third, which so obviously carries on the main theme of the poem. So here is the account of the disaster of the vine. And deleting 14a, as already intimated, 13 and 14b tell of the doleful sequel.

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[4] A. C. Johnson, H. S. Gehman, and E. H. Kase, _The John H. Scheide Biblical Papyri: Ezekiel_ (1938), p. 141, and Pl. I.

Important as these considerations are for text criticism, they do not seriously affect our major interest at present in historical criticism and exegesis. The theme of the poem is apparent. The vine is Judah; this is a very common symbolism in the Old Testament. And here, just as in verses 1-9, Judah is celebrated as the mother of kings. But a subtle difference shows itself. The former poem is about individuals; this speaks of the dynasty. The line of Davidic kings is the strong branch, the scepter of rule. The figurative language of verse 12 clearly relates the disaster of 586 and the consequent overthrow of the dynasty. But in the doleful days of the writer the vine was planted in the desert and had no strong branch for a ruler's scepter: Judah is in the desolation of exile, and the Davidic family has disappeared.

There is little to show how long after 586 the poet lived and wrote. The mood of kindliness toward the kings of Judah, apparently including the last three, is very different from Ezekiel's attitude. There is no sound reason for postulating genuineness.[6] Rather, the poem is late, though how late it is difficult to determine. The writer accepts as final the termination of the dynasty, showing no interest in designs for a restoration, which probably continued as long as Jehoiachin lived and flared up in Zerubabbel's ill-starred sedition. The date, then, can scarcely have been before 500 B.C. and may well be much later, when the passage of time had functioned to throw a halo over the entire Davidic family. However, unless we take the improbable course of postulating an anti-Hasmonean authorship, it is out of the question to suppose that the poem is as late as that in verses 2-9; at 135 B.C. it would have been quite inaccurate, unless distorted by partisanship, to assert that Judah had no strong branch for a ruler's scepter. With this, then, disappears the common view that verses 10-14 were written in imitation of 2-9. Rather, the reverse position could be defended.

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[5] For this expression cf. Jer. 48:17.

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[6] It is of interest to note that the writer in the Monthly Magazine of 1798 (see above, p. 5) commented that "the xixth chapter indeed, might pass for a fragment of Jeremiah." However, by this he did not intend to impugn its genuineness.

XII

CHAPTER 33

If guided by the presence of the familiar introduction ויהי דבר יהוה אלי לאמר בן־אדם, we should say that we have in this chapter two sections, verses 1-20 and 23-33, with verses 21-22 regarded as a preliminary to the second of these; which perhaps the editor intended. But both are complex, and the problems of their analysis are many. It will serve our study best to recognize the following: verses 1-9, 10-20, 21-22, 23-29, and 30-33.

The point of critical approach to the first of these is the near-identity of verses 7-9 with 3:17-19. The differences are clearly only copyist's slips; we have thus a real duplication, a situation related to, though differing from, the conflate recensions we have recently studied. But criticism in this case is easy. The one problem is that of the last clause of verse 7. It is supported by 3:17 and by LXX at that point; but in this chapter it is lacking from the best Greek sources.[1] And, as the Hebrew text stands, it constitutes a tristich element in an otherwise distich context, a situation that is an almost infallible mark of corruption. Our impulse, then, is to delete it. But there are yet relevant considerations. It has logical appropriateness here; without it the transition of thought is harsh. And, as we shall see in a moment, the rest of the poetic oracle sets up clearly in couplets, leaving then an isolated line at the beginning. It is best to retain the stichos; and then we are driven to believe that its balancing statement has disappeared without a trace. Then, employing the evidence of LXX as well as of 3:17-19, the complete oracle as preserved would be of this content:

ואתה בן־אדם
צפה נתתיך לבית ישראל   ושמעת מפי דבר
?   ?   ?   _ והזהרת אותם ממני

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[1] Unfortunately, No. 967 is not preserved from 32:30 to 34:6.

באמרי לרשע מות תמות   ולא דברת להזהיר מדרכו
הוא רשע בעונו ימות   ודמו מידך אבקש

ואתה כי הזהרת רשע   ולא שב מרשעו ומדרכו
הוא בעונו ימות   ואתה נפשך הצלת

And you, son of man,
A watchman I have set you for the House of Israel;
when you hear a word from my mouth
? ? ? ? ?
and you shall warn them from me.

When I say to the wicked, You shall certainly die,
and you do not speak out to warn him from his way,
that wicked one shall die for his evil
but his blood from your hand I will require.

And you: when you warn the wicked
and he does not turn from his wicked way,
he shall die for his evil,
but you will have cleared yourself.

That it is genuine calls for no demonstration. But whereas in chapter 3 the oracle is immediately preceded by the genuine formula ויהי דבר יהוה אלי לאמר , in this chapter five verses intervene. But the prosy, interpretative character of these verses, their citation of words from the oracle as well as from other verses of the chapter, and further the testimony of chapter 3 leave us in no doubt that they are spurious. It is an interesting divergence from the usual procedure in the book; here the commentary precedes the oracle, ostensibly as an introduction. There can be no doubt that chapter 3 represents the better location for the passage: that is, it does on the common view that the order of the book is roughly chronological. For this utterance is best associated with the beginning of Ezekiel's public career. On the grounds of evidence already adduced it must then be as early as the first years of Zedekiah's reign.

In verses 10-12 there is a double address to the people, introduced by the now familiar imperative אמר ("say"). Further, metrical form can readily be detected in both the utterances. But before the seemingly obvious conclusion is accepted, two considerations must be examined. The genuine oracle just now surveyed is concerned exclusively with the prophet's relation to the wicked (רשע). This is appropriate to the situation and to what we may postulate of Ezekiel's concept of his mission. He was at this time a prophet to the people of Jerusalem, who added to their inherited religious evils an increasing political perversity. His ministry through the years of Zedekiah's reign, as far as we have yet seen, was then, except for the riddle of the eagle in chapter 17, one of stern rebuke and warning. But the case of the righteous as presented in verse 13 departs completely from this rule. And the theme of the verse is not the relation of Ezekiel to the righteous but a theological question of the fate of a backslider. Also the wording of the address in verse 12 is strange. This phrase בני עמך ("sons of your people") occurs in the Book of Ezekiel only in verses 2, 12, 17, and 30 of this chapter and in 37:18. We may not beg the question by ruling that all are spurious; but the occurrence in verse 2 certainly is. And the infrequency of the usage is sufficient to add to our suspicions here in verse 12. But we go on; verse 13 is balanced by verses 14-15, which give the corresponding case of a wicked man who changes his ways. Verse 14 is patently commentary on verse 8; it quotes and develops it in characteristic fashion. So the matter becomes clear. There is a genuine utterance in verses 10-11, fittingly addressed to בית ישראל ("House of Israel"). But verses 12 ff. are a theological development; they are spurious commentary and, as we have seen, are not clear of the charge o false commentary, since they evade the point of the oracle. There is here no wish to disparage their worth; they deal with a more important matter than the genuine utterance, and probably they met some deep need of their time. But they are not Ezekiel's.

However, the genuine material in verses 10-11 is striking enough in itself. This mood of penitent despair can have come on the people only after 586 B.C. And in Ezekiel's reply there is voiced that solicitous encouragement for which this later part of his ministry has always been reputed. To this extent, at least, tradition is vindicated. With a few corrections of the text on the basis of LXX or the logic of the situation, we secure this:

כן אמרתם לאמר
פשעינו וחטאתינו עלינו   ובם אנחנו נמקים
אמר אליהם חי־אני נאם יהוה
אם אחפץ במות הרשע   כי אם בשוב רשע מדרכו
שובו שובו מדרכיכם   למה תמות בית ישראל

....thus you say,
Our iniquities and our sins have come upon us,
and we pine away in them.
Say to them,
As I live, declares the Lord,
I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked
but in the return of the wicked from his way.
Return! Return, from your ways;
why will you die, O House of Israel?

It is apparent that the oracle has no relevance to that in verses 7-9. The introductory אמר ("say") must not mislead us into regarding this as a genuine interpretation of its context; instead, it is an entirely independent utterance. Its analogies are rather with passages such as 18:1-3, in which Ezekiel replies to a mood or saying of his contemporaries.

Verses 21-23 are of an interest beyond their intrinsic worth. The date arrests us. The city fell in the eleventh year, the fourth month, the ninth day. Even if we accept the lower reading of 11/10/5 for verse 21, as given by some Hebrew manuscripts and LXX and Syriac, we have still an interval of almost six months between the fall of the city and the arrival of the fugitive to announce this fact to Ezekiel. One must remark the generous time allowed for this journey, since Ezra took only four months to go from Babylonia to Jerusalem.[2] But the point of high relevance is that

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[2] Ezra 7:9; but cf. 8:31. However, in Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, LIV (1936), 114-15, Bewer undertakes to defend the reliability of the dating by changing it to fifth month, tenth day. And then he supposes that the messenger had slipped out of the city along with Zedekiah but made good his escape and so came to Ezekiel by the direct route across the desert. And Ezekiel was prepared telepathically for his coming! But this is precisely the sort of textual criticism from which we had hoped we were delivered. There is not a scrap of evidence for Bewer's reading, nor does he attempt to adduce any; it is pure conjecture advanced in the interests of his theory. The fact that the change advocated is slight--merely the interchange of two words--does not mitigate the pernicious principle involved. Along this

Ezekiel was not in Babylonia at all at this time. Chapter 7 shows his presence in Jerusalem a few days, at most, before the fall of the city; and 11:15 reveals that he was there still when the train of captives was assembled a month later.[3] What need of six months to get word to him? What need of a messenger at all to announce a fact of which he was but too well aware? The incident is the creation of some later commentator, who perhaps believed, but in any case embellished, the fiction that Ezekiel went to Babylonia with the first captivity. So the "Babylonian editor," of whom several modern critics speak, was a reality. And here we have caught him red-handed! And this is a dated passage, identical in form with most others in the book. What does this mean? Now further, the allusion in verse 22 to 3:26 is well known. That the passages are related is apparent in their common use of the verb אלם ("be dumb"), a fact which we shall cherish against our future study of chapter 3. But the "Babylonian editor" here gives the sequel of the alleged dumbness of that passage: for him Ezekiel was dumb until news arrived of the fall of the city.

The presence of a genuine oracle in 23 ff. is apparent. From אחד ("one") in verse 24, it sets up neatly as a couplet in 3:2, 2:3 measure. But the ostensible reply by Ezekiel in verses 25-26 is not supported by LXX, except the first two words. There is no doubt it is spurious. But another reply begins in verse 27; introduced, however, by the unusual כה תאמר ("thus shall you say"). But the evidence of LXX is that the formula in verse 25 belongs here. This gives us Ezekiel's favorite imperative אמר ("say"). Still, if we recognize a genuine utterance, it cannot go beyond this one verse, for 28 is a medley of characteristic commentator's phrases, and 29 is too obviously spurious to

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line there is nothing to stop us from going the full length with Cheyne and Duhm in their re-writing of the Old Testament. Moreover, Bewer ignores the cogent evidence, pointed out several years before the date of his brief note, that Ezekiel was not in Babylonia at this time but in Judah.

[3] II Kings 25:8, 11, 21.

merit remark. Although מערות ("caves") might be an alternate reading for מצדות ("fastnesses"), the evidence supports it strongly. And so we secure this:

חי־אני
אם־לא אשר בחרבות   בחרב יפלו
ואשר על־פני השדה   לחית נתתיו
ואשר במצדות ובמערות   בדבר ימותו

As I live
    Surely those who are in the ruins
        by the sword shall fall;
    whoever is in the country
        I will give to ravenous beasts;
    and those who are in fastnesses and caves
        by pestilence shall die.

This response by Ezekiel suggests to us the three fates of chapter 5, in particular the spurious expansions of the theme there, which may have drawn some suggestion from the present passage. But as well the similarity of the original oracle to 11:14-15 is evident; even the word מורשה (vs. 24) is common to the two. But there is obvious difference, nonetheless, so that we need not postulate editorial repetition. Rather, it would seem that we have two similar but distinct oracles from Ezekiel. And their close relation in time is shown by the word חרבות ("ruins") here in verse 24. These were clearly the devastations worked by the Chaldean army. But the point of view has widened from that of most of Ezekiel's oracles hitherto. For the interpretation, or genuine comment, in verse 27 shows that, while some of the people remained in the ruins, some were out in the open country, and others hiding in fastnesses and caves. Mention is made in 7:16 of people in the hills, yet they are presented as fugitives who had slipped through the Chaldean lines. The situation here is different. The city has fallen, the land is in ruins, and those who can are hiding from the Chaldean troops still occupying Judah. Clearly this is the interval mentioned above, the month between the fall of the city and the departure of the conquerors with their train of exiles.

The remaining verses of the chapter provide less clear criteria for critical judgment than might be desired. The absence of the genuine introductory formula ויהי דבר יהוה אלי לאמר

("And the word of the Lord came to me saying") is to be noted; and, as mentioned above, the people are referred to in the unusual phrase בני עמך ("sons of your people"). Verse 33, while beginning with acceptable words, almost certainly runs off into spurious interpretation, so we are impelled to judge that the favorable beginning is due merely to typical allusion to genuine material, notably chapter 7. Elsewhere the verses are expanded, as is shown by versional omissions. Yet all these considerations do not suffice to condemn the passage. It has already been noted that the indisputably genuine oracles in chapters 4-5 lack the usual introduction; and while בני עמך is evidently spurious earlier in this chapter, that is not demonstration that it must always be so. Further, a sort of rhythm, approximating Ezekiel's usual style can be followed through much of the passage. On the whole, it is best to give tradition the benefit of such measure of doubt as exists and conclude that perhaps most of the section is genuine. It will be apparent that 32*b* and the similar words in 31 are duplicates; textual and logical considerations support 32 as the original. It is probable, then, that 31 in entirety is to be ignored. If the reading שׁיר ("song") in 32*a* is correct--and there is no solid reason to amend it into שׁר ("singer")--then מטב נגן ("who plays well") cannot be right. Apparently this is a gloss on יפה קול ("of beautiful sound"), which is to be preferred then as original. The utterance will then set up in a triad, thus:

באו־נא ושמעו   היוצא מאת יהוה
והנך להם כשיר עוגבים   יפה קול
ושמעו את־דבריך   ועשׂים אינם אותם

"Come now, and hear
    what comes from the Lord."
And see! you are to them as a song with pipes,
    of melodious sound:
they listen to your words
    but do them not.

The passage is of considerable interest for its light on contemporary opinion of Ezekiel. But, when parallels in other prophetic books are recalled, it will be recognized that we have here a flash of light on the standing of the prophets as a whole among those who knew them. Jeremiah was dubbed a lunatic;[4] elsewhere he complains that he was generally laughed at.[5] Amos was ordered away from Bethel as a mistaken enthusiast.[6] Micah entailed the hostility of the common prophets,[7] who unquestionably had popular respect and support. So Ezekiel realized he was for his compatriots merely so much entertainment; as cynical folk today will attend emotionalist religious services, just to see what will happen, so these ancient Jews sat about Ezekiel to watch his entertaining dramas but with never a thought that he should be taken seriously.

The date of the utterance would seem best ascribed to the middle years of Zedekiah's reign. The mood of censure in verse 32 is foreign to what little we know of Ezekiel's work after 586 B.C., though this is a matter on which we are yet to assemble such evidence as is available. On the other hand, he has already an established reputation as a didactic poet; but absence of allusion to coming disaster would appear to preclude a date late in the time of Zedekiah.

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[4] Jer. 29:26-27.

[5] Jer. 20:7.

[6] Amos 7:12.

[7] Mic. 3:5-8.

XIII

CHAPTER 18

The obvious advance from chapter 33 is into chapter 18; the similarities and interrelations of the two are familiar to every student of the book. But, unlike the former, chapter 18 is of a single theme. This has various aspects and subdivisions as the topic is developed; but it is all the famous discussion of individual responsibility and deserts. After an initial statement in verses 1-4, verses 5-20 recount the individual responsibility of the righteous and the wicked; verses 21-29 describe the effect of a change of conduct; and the chapter closes with an earnest appeal, in verses 30-32, for personal reform. But nothing is implied in the unity of the theme or its subdivision as to the unity of authorship or the genuineness of any or all of these sections. Nor will the close interrelations with chapter 33 disclose the original situation. We saw reason to reject 33:25-26; it is closely related to 18:6 and subsequent similar expressions; but that does not require that these are spurious as well. It may have been copied at a late period into chapter 33 under the influence of the passage here. Nor will the following additional interrelations carry us closer to a decision: 18:23 and 33:10-11; 18:21, 27 f. and 33:14 f.; 18:25, 29 and 33:17, 20. We must attack the problem along another line.

The chapter starts auspiciously; it has the familiar mood and form of Ezekiel's responses to the people. We note the authentic introductory formula in verse 1; and the opening phraseology in verse 3 is much like utterances we accepted in chapter 33:11 and 27. There is every reason to admit the presence of a genuine oracle. But what are its limits?

The parallel citation in Jer. 31:29 of the popular proverb given in verse 2 interprets it as implying a heritage of guilt, as obviously it does when used of ethical matters;

it says (vs. 30): "But each shall die for his own guilt; every man who eats sour grapes: his teeth shall be set on edge." Now in 18:4 it would seem that a different line is taken in the generalization of God's power over all persons. Yet the conclusion of the verse shows that this is presented but as the basis for emphasizing that the sinner shall die in his guilt. So actually the two passages agree in their interpretation of the proverb. And just as in 33:7-9 the emphasis is on the fate of the wicked; that of the righteous is perhaps to be inferred from the statement that all souls are God's, but it is not expressed. The immediate sequel, verses 5-17, we may concede, gives in its general effect a correct exposition of the theme thus announced at the opening of the chapter. But it is to be observed that at verse 18 the thought merges into a theodicy which is quite foreign to verses 3-4. And, as well, such adequacy of exposition as verses 5-17 provide is qualified by the fact that they begin with the fate of a righteous man. It is true, the wicked one presently finds his place and appropriate discussion, but still a normal development from verses 3-4 would have inverted the present order; the section should have begun with the wicked man, with whom verse 4 had closed, and then turned in succession to righteous and wicked heirs if the writer so desired. Further, we naturally expect that this wicked one when he does enter the discussion will be described by some form of the word חטא ("sin") employed in verse 4. But, to our surprise, we go all the way to verse 14 before it occurs; and in the balance of the chapter it is found only twice (vss. 20 and 24). On the contrary, the case of the sinner is introduced, in verse 10, with the word פריץ ("violent one"); then the words רשע ("wicked") and פשע ("iniquity") occur somewhat frequently. An important consideration also is that verses 5 ff. are obviously prose, though verse 5 itself might be considered metrical. It would be highly interesting if at last we should find a genuine prose oracle; however, enough disturbing facts are already apparent to deter us from jumping as yet to this conclusion.

But let us attack the problem from another side. Verses 30-32 have the doctrine of the new heart and spirit, which we have already found in chapters 36 and 11, where we saw conclusive reason to consider it very late. It is probable that this is a true lead for the present passage. In any case, we have moved so far from the modest suggestion contained in verse 4 that there is no reasonable alternative but to recognize that this section is spurious. However, it is in place to offer the comment, though lacking critical significance, that this is a really great passage. There is here no sickly quietism but the wholesome vigor characteristic of Old Testament theology as a whole. In the words of another great thinker, this is a call simply to "cease to do evil; learn to do well." With the great eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans in mind, we recognize that such is not the whole matter. Yet here, too, is a significant statement of divine grace. And the elevation of the passage warrants the re-emphasis that in biblical criticism "spurious" does not mean "worthless."

The preceding section is actually little but a restatement of the content of verses 5-20, and in its citation of words and phrasing it follows methods of the commentator already familiar. So the possibility of genuine material shrinks to verses 1-20, which, as we have seen, means really the two passages, 1-4 and 5-20. It is a striking fact that the latter of these is devoid of the common introductory phrases of the commentator, לכן ("therefore") or לכן כה אמר יהוה ("therefore thus says the Lord"), and יען ("because") or יען אשר ("because"). But still the considerations surveyed a moment ago compel us to distinguish these two passages and to adjudge the second spurious. The criteria are less clear than elsewhere, yet the impression they make grows the more one considers them. This is but a new sort of commentary. Instead of mere casual comments, it is a careful exposition and application, really a small homily, done so well that the line of separation becomes evident only after thorough study.

The genuine material, then, is found only in verses 1-4. And with this clarification it is seen to be entirely acceptable. That the quoted proverb is metrical is neither remarkable nor significant. But as well Ezekiel's response in verses 3-4 likewise attains poetic form, though the precise definition of this form is not so apparent as in most of Ezekiel's oracles. It seems best to consider that verse 3 is a prose introduction. We should, in any case, set apart חי־אני נאם אדני יהוה ("as I live, is the oracle of the Lord") as an anacrustic beginning; but we would be obliged as well to delete בישראל ("in Israel"), though on little other grounds than meter. More serious, however, is the impossible organization of the "poem" if one undertakes to combine verses 3 and 4. We shall then consider that the poetic oracle is confined to the single tristich line in verse 4:

הן כל־הנפשוֹת לי הנה   כנפש האב וכנפש הבן לי־הנה   הנפש החטאת היא תמות

Behold all souls are mine--
  father and son alike are mine.
  The soul who sins, he shall die.

Ezekiel's response is as simple, and almost as brief, as the proverb which called it forth: merely the assertion that all alike are in the hands of God and he apportions punishment to the individual sinner. It may well seem a slight answer to the serious implications of the people's mood. But it, too, had slight expression. Both alike are characteristic of the Orient; and Ezekiel's utterance has that lightness of touch which we have seen to be typical.

The great doctrine of individualism, for which Ezekiel has been famous, is his only in embryo. It is clearly stated in the brief genuine oracle; but the presentation is such that we may well question whether Ezekiel had realized its full implications. It was some later thinker who built on his foundations and left us the elaborated discussion now contained in this chapter. A similar situation exists in chapter 33; the genuine material relevant to this question, verses 10-11, no less than the oracle in chapter 18, carries clear implication of a concept of individual relationship to guilt and the grace of God. But there, too, the elaboration was done by later hands. We saw reason to believe the oracle there was uttered some time after 586 B.C. The same vague, long period would seem the most probable dating for this as well, except for the phrase in the superscription, "upon the land of Israel"; it would be difficult to fit this with Ezekiel's removal to Babylonia. But the rendering of LXX casts doubt on the accuracy of the text at this point. With some remaining uncertainty, we can but leave the matter there.

XIV

CHAPTER 34

In its critical features chapter 34 appears to resemble chapter 18. It likewise begins with the authentic formula, seems to have a genuine poetic oracle, and moves on into exposition that continues throughout the chapter. But there the resemblances end. For the marks of the commentator are here fully apparent. Indeed, the now familiar spurious introductory phrases give us an approximate division of the chapter; it has these sections: verses 1-6, 7-10, 11-19, and 20-31. Little observation, and no argument, will be required to demonstrate that all that is genuine is comprised within the first of these. But not all of this is from Ezekiel. The perfect tenses used of the scattering of the sheep (in vss. 5-6) reveal that the disasters of 597 and 586 are accomplished. The verb פוץ ("scatter"), which we have found used characteristically of the Diaspora, and the breadth of the dispersion so described show clearly that there is here a very late expander of the original oracle. But it is dubious in the extreme that any of verse 4 is genuine. This is the cataloguing editor; and he overdoes it in his characteristic way. It is possible that verse 3, or some part of it, is original; but certainly the oracle does not go beyond this. In verse 2 there is a series of good three-beat stichoi, giving thus a 3:3:3 line. But verse 4 is of four two's. The combination would produce a very strange result indeed. On metric grounds it is best to conclude that the oracle was but the single tristich line contained in verse 2; it is notable how often our results uncover without design this structure. Apparently, the tristich line was in favor with Ezekiel.

The oracle is seen, then, to be a denunciation of the selfish exploitation of the common people by the rulers of Judah. No date is intimated; it might be regarded as a post eventum judgment on the fall of the state. But Ezekiel does not show himself interested in that sort of utterance; his concern is with vital issues and conduct of the moment. The selfish rulers were much more probably a contemporary reality when he spoke these words. From our growing knowledge of Ezekiel's career we shall do best to ascribe them to the reign of Zedekiah. And, since there is no hint here of coming disaster, apparently the time is yet early in the reign. Contrary to general opinion, this is not an oracle of comfort and encouragement but the reverse. It is due to the spurious additions that the chapter has been so classed.

But now an interesting feature emerges. The comments in 7-10 are based more on the material we have adjudged spurious than on the original tristich line. And, consistent with our earlier observation, this commentator reveals his late date by his allusions to the unshepherded state of the scattered and exploited Jews. This is not the early years of the Exile, covered by Ezekiel's few decades in Babylonia: we have already seen him commenting in very different terms on that situation; it is the wider dispersion of late times. Verses 12-15 are from the idyllic commentator of the Diaspora whose work we met in chapter 36, or from one of like mind. It is a passage of great beauty, obviously related in some way to Psalm 23. Possibly, the concluding formula in verse 15 represents an original termination; in any case, 16 is commentary on verse 4; and 17 has the appearance of a fresh beginning, with which the writer runs on into a development of the oracle. But verse 20 repeats verse 17 in the way characteristic of a new commentator. This is not the redundancy with which Ezekiel has been falsely charged but a new commentator citing a passage from what had by his time become accepted Scripture. In verse 21 he applies the original charge against the shepherds to explain the exile of the Jewish people; in 22 he refers to verse 8, as also in 28. But his thought runs on into a messianic expectation, which then some glossator (if we may judge by the disorder of the sentence) has interpreted as David redivivus. The thought is seized eagerly in verse 24 and developed into a charming picture of a peaceful, happy land whose people dwell in plenty and in peace with God and man. The prevalence of this sort of idea through the ancient Orient, it is unnecessary to relate. A good example is found in the introduction to the Annals of Ashurbanipal. It is probable that verses 29-31 are again of different authorship. For if מטע ("planting") has its literal sense, then it merely repeats the promise of fertility of the previous verses and employs the word והקמתי ("and I shall raise up") in a different sense from that of verse 23. On the other hand, if, as seems probable, מטע is messianic, it has departed from the clear terms of verses 23-24. It is of interest, too, that verse 29 employs the frequent thought of the shame borne by the Jews among the gentile nations.

The chapter offers important demonstration of the theory advanced above that frequently the chapters of the Book of Ezekiel are arranged in the chronological sequence in which they grew up: the earliest closest to the oracle, and the later added in period after period as devout Jews felt moved to comment on their Scripture. But this carries a further implication here; for we saw that verse 6 is apparently from the Diaspora, when already the oracles of Ezekiel were sanctified by centuries of pious use; in any case, the following section is of that late date. And then the subsequent parts of the chapter follow successively at still later dates. The chapter itself serves as a sort of corollary to the notable evidence of papyrus No. 967 in regard to chapter 36, to which reference has been so frequently made.

CHAPTER 22

The chapter divides ostensibly into three sections, each introduced by the genuine formula: verses 1-16, 17-22, and 23-31.

The characteristic features of Ezekiel's oracles are readily detected in verses 1-4; the introduction is of the heavier type which we have sometimes met, but there is no reason to tamper with it. The lower limit of the genuine material is readily recognized at the end of 4*a*, both in the presence of the following introductory על־כן ("therefore" and in the indisputable nature of the succeeding material as commentary. But within this extent there is still uncertaint for the text of the oracle has certainly suffered damage. It is highly probable that לבוא עתה ("her time is to come") is intruded in verse 3 as an anticipation of the similar sentiment in verse 4; and the same judgment is to be passed on לטמאה ("for uncleanness") at the end of 3. Consideration of the terse, compact style of the genuine Ezekiel supports these actions. It is tempting to remove בתוכה ("in its midst") to replace עליה ("upon it"), where indeed Syriac and Targum read it as a repetition. But it is always better to retain the text if possible. Reading שׁפכת דם ("shedding blood") as a single metrical beat and understanding עליה as meaning "in addition to it," i.e., to the (shedding of the) blood, the text becomes acceptable. In verse 4 we are to accept the cogent textual evidence that exists and emend עד ("unto") to עת ("time"). The oracle then is:

עיר שׁפכת דם בתוכה   ועשׂתה גלולים עליה
בדמך אשר־שׁפכת אשמת   ובגלוליך אשר עשׂית טמאת
ותקריבי יומך   ותבוא עת שׁנותיך

A city shedding blood within it!
    And it has made idols as well.
Of your blood that you have shed you are guilty,
    and by your idols that you have made you are unclean.
You have brought close your day;
    and your year of doom has arrived!

The passage expresses more clearly than most of Ezekiel's utterances his charges against his contemporaries. These are social oppression with violence and religious infidelity, in particular idolatry; this is dubbed "uncleanness" and, in the introduction (vs. 2), "abomination"--a judgment but too well deserved by the pagan cults of ancient Palestine. The time of the oracle is somewhat clearly indicated; the meance of the Chaldeans has become acute; the closing words render it certain that the date cannot be earlier than 588 B.C., though perhaps a little before the actual arrival of the invaders in that year.

The past tenses of the verbs in the remainder of verse 4 show the standpoint of the commentator; he is invoking Ezekiel's arraignment to explain the national disaster. Verse 5 is from one of the "shamed" commentators. And, from this point onward, the theme of the wickedness of the city is expounded and exemplified. Influences of chapter 18 are in evidence, particularly in verses 9-12. Verse 15 has the familiar phraseology of the commentator from the Diaspora.

In the second section relationships with chapter 24 are apparent. In fact, one might be tempted to conclude that this is nothing but a spurious recension of the oracle of the boiling pot. But the differences are greater than the similarities. There is no reason to deny a genuine original, although the text is badly preserved. The cataloguing commentator got in his work in verse 17, which then another, apparently, repeated in 20. But there are other confusions also. Employing the evidence of the citations along with that of the corrupt oracle, it is probable that originally the utterance was approximately of this sort:

בן־אדם
היו־לי בית־ישראל לסיגים ונפחתי עליהם באש עברתי

Son of man,
The House of Israel are dross to me.
I will blow upon them with the fire of my indignation.

It is difficult to assign a date. The thought is similar to that of verses 1-4a. But, on the other hand, if the symbol is actually reminiscent of the proverb in 11:3 and its application in 24:1-5, the date of the latter is suggested, that is, at the beginning of the siege.

The text of verse 24 is equally uncertain. LXX inverted the order of consonants of מטהרה, securing some form of the verb "to rain," which is obviously an apt parallel to גשמה. But perhaps that is cogent evidence against the reading: it is a too plausible alteration; consciously or otherwise, the old translators fell foul of the modern critic's temptation to juggle with the Hebrew consonants. But also the immediate introduction of the oracle is most unusual; the imperative of אמר ("say") has hitherto been reserved for responses. However, disturbing as these considerations may be, we cannot do better than accept the text much as it is:

את ארץ לא מטהרה   ולא גשמה ביום זעם

A land unclean are you!
 In a day of wrath no rain has come.

The situation we can deduce only from the content. The land was suffering from drought, which Ezekiel, like many another before and since, interpreted as a just punishment for the religious infidelity of its inhabitants. Whether this was the same drought as called forth Jeremiah's more famous poem (Jer. 14:1-6) we do not know; the date of this within the career of Jeremiah is as vague as is the other in Ezekiel's. But it is tempting to see the two prophets collaborating here once more. Did some ancient exegete entertain this thought? For he has introduced here the perversity of the popular prophets, just as the parallel passage in Jeremiah is followed by his complaint of the false leadership of the people by his contemporary prophets. The indictment runs on to include the priests and princes. One wonders whether this is all literary reminiscence on the part of the writer or whether he was speaking out of painful experience of the same social oppression in his late time as had called forth the denunciations by the great prophets. However, a very interesting feature is that, after completing the list of offending officials, the passage reverts to the prophets and in verses 28 and 30 is clearly alluding to 13:10, and 5—another case of the commentators' familiarity with the Book of Ezekiel but also an important indication that evidence for the original text of this book is not always confined to the chapter in which the oracle occurs. Verse 31 refers to both the preceding oracles, those in verses 17 ff. and 23-24.

XVI

CHAPTER 13

This, again, is of but a single theme. Verse 17 introduces a fresh aspect of the topic, but it amounts to little more than a subdivision. The chapter as a whole is concerned with false prophecy. It begins with features promising for the critic: the introductory phrases ring true to Ezekiel. And clearly the poetic oracle starts with הוי ("woe") in verse 3. But then several details demand careful study. Apparently we are to accept the reading מלבם ("out of their hearts") of LXX for הנבלים ("foolish"). It has support from verse 2, where the occurrence of the phrase is very unusual; evidently, it was misplaced there. Verse 3b is in part omitted by LXX; and the trite nature of its entire contents indorses this course. In verse 4 there is something excessive; LXX does not support היו ("were"); but, on the other hand, נביאיך ישראל ("your prophets, Israel") is heavy for the meter, and, besides, its repetition so soon after verse 3 is not convincing. Yet we can do nothing but abide by the weight of textual evidence. In verse 5 we have, fortunately, richer critical sources. In addition to LXX, which reads at the outset οὐκ ἔστησαν, there is the testimony of 22:30, to which attention was called a little ago. It has ועמד בפרצות ("and standing in the breach"). There can be no doubt that לא עליתם ("you have not gone up") here is corrupt for לא עמדו ("they did not stand"); and then לעמד ("to stand") is a duplicate. And for במלחמה ("in war") LXX has the strange equivalent οἱ λέγοντες. Strictly it is not an equivalent at all but evidence of deep corruption; we shall not be far astray if we conclude that both Hebrew and Greek are wrong. And then the situation becomes clear. במלחמה is corrupt for בפרצות ("in the breaches"); we have a duplicate recension of the entire opening phrase of the verse. But 22:30 follows this phrase with לפני ("before me").

The meter requires some word; but evidently this is introduced by the commentator in the interest of his context. It is better to accept the reading of 5b, ביום יהוה ("in the day of the Lord") as original. We need go no further. Verse 6 is of different structure, and its mood is that of the cataloguer. So the oracle is this:

הוי על־נביאי מלבם   כשֻעלים בחרבות   נביאיך ישראל
לא עמדו בפרצות ביום יהוה   ויגדרו גדר   על־בית ישראל

Woe to those who prophesy out of their own heart!
    As jackals among ruins
    are your prophets, Israel.
They stood not in the breaches in the Day of the Lord,
    nor built a wall
    for the House of Israel.

It is a tristich couplet in 3:2:2 measure, its concise statement highly characteristic of Ezekiel's style. The date is difficult to determine. The oracle might be a judgment in retrospect. There were false prophets in Babylonia, as we know from the letter of Jeremiah; Ezekiel might here be condemning them as of the same stuff as those who played false to Judah in her crisis. But all this seems remote from the directness of his mind. It is more probable that he is rebuking the popular prophets of Judah for their lack of leadership during the siege. The tragedy is imminent, if not already present, for by this time there are abundant desolations, and the day of the Lord draws on apace. The occasion is best identified as shortly before, or immediately after, the fall of the city.

Now a striking fact emerges. The commentary is based primarily on the spurious additions in verses 6-7; it alludes only remotely to the genuine oracle by its introduction of a tottering wall. There is slight inconsistency, too. The oracle obviously ridicules the prophets for their cowardice: they are mere jackals in the day of danger; but the commentary has nothing of this, emphasizing instead the falsity of their inspiration. This divergence is particularly apparent in verse 16. An odd feature, too, is how verse 10 brings in the tottering wall in a most casual way; one might suspect that it is there but a glossator's allusion to Isa. 30:13. But then it catches the fancy of the next commentator, who makes it his main theme. The word תפל is rare; it occurs in this sense only here and in the additional commentary already referred to in 22:28 ff. Is it some sort of pun on the verb נפל, which is then featured in the passage?

It is possible that a genuine oracle is contained in verses 17-19; the phraseology of 17-18a is authentic, though lacking לאמר והי דבר יהוה אלי; and certainly we must always give the benefit of any doubt to the conservative position. In that case, the following commends itself as the best that can be done with present resources. Its difficulties are apparent, however.

הוי למתפרות כסתות על כל־אצילי־יד
ועשות המספחות על־ראש כל־קומה לצודד נפשות
ותחללנה אתי אל־עמי בשעלי שעורים ובפתותי לחם

Woe to those who sew bands
    on the joints of every hand,
and make veils
    for all sorts of people
    to hunt souls:
and they profane me to my people
    for handfuls of barley
    and bits of bread.

Nothing can be said as to date or circumstances; we can but bow to tradition and concede that this may have been uttered at about the same time as the preceding. It is possible there is some interrelation in the apparent punning on שעלים ("jackals" [vs. 4]) in the words שעלי שעורים ("handfuls of barley").

The rest of the chapter is characteristic commentary, with its introductory formula, its vague threats, its rich allusions to the text, and its inane repetitions. It is interesting to note what an influence chapter 18 had on some of these men; it is dragged in here also in verse 22.

XVII

CHAPTER 20

Like chapter 18, this is a close-knit development of a single theme. The authentic introduction also gives presumption of the presence of a genuine oracle. But there occur as well the particle יען ("because" [vss. 16 and 24]) and the introductions דבר (or אמר) אל בית ישראל ("speak, or say, to the House of Israel" [vss. 27 and 30]) and the familiar phrase about knowing "that I am the Lord." Besides, as we shall see, the discussion runs over into some very late material. So the ostensible unity of the chapter is deceptive. However, the genuine oracle, whatever its limits, merges so naturally into the solid body of the chapter that it is difficult to detect the line of division. But, in any case, the following sections are apparent: verse 1, the visit of the elders; verses 2-29, a sketch of Israel's dubious history; and verses 30-44, judgment and promise. The two latter obviously are subject to further subdivision. Verses 2-3 repudiate the inquiry of the elders; verses 4 ff. explain this on the grounds of the nation's continuing badness; verses 5-10, Israel in Egypt, where, it is claimed, their career of idolatry began; verses 11-17, the older generation in the desert; verses 18-26, the second generation in the desert; and verses 27-29, Israel in Canaan. Then in the second section we find these: verses 30-32, summary of present iniquities; verses 33-38, the future judgment in the wilderness; and verses 39-44, restoration to divine favor.

A striking feature of verses 5-26 is the repetition of phrases as the account moves on from period to period. But verses 27-29 avoid this, though it would be quite as fitting as earlier. Along with an altered tone, this seems to indicate a new author, though certainly the discussion has reached no finality at verse 26. Verses 33-38 have the familiar marks of the Diaspora: the bringing-out from the peoples and gathering from the lands. And the idea of separating good from bad is a typical development of later times, not alone as an expression of the doctrine of individualism which, as we have seen, received impulse from Ezekiel, but as well for the concept of a righteous kernel within the nation, the beginning of what we know as the church within the state. These verses are notable, too, for their idea of the judgment in the wilderness. It is a not unnatural corollary to the sketch of early history given above in the chapter, but too it is part of the common idea of this later time that regarded the Exile as a second oppression from which the nation was to be delivered through experiences not unlike the Exodus from Egypt. The final verses of the chapter (39-44) express the belief, rare in these comments in the Book of Ezekiel, that the happy future will be characterized by a careful performance of the ritual. But here, as well, we note the familiar idea of the "shamed" editor: Israel will remember its former badness with humiliation and will understand that it was necessary for the Lord to deal sternly with the nation.

It will be apparent, then, that the chapter moves far away from genuine utterances of Ezekiel. Moreover, it will be obvious that whatever original material may be found here must be limited to verses 1-29. In the light of our findings hitherto, this will at once strike us as a generous allowance. But the problem is to detect the measure of genuine within this mass.

The episode of the elders coming to consult Ezekiel is related also in 14:1 and 8:1. The former has no date, but that in chapter 8 is recorded as of 6/6/5, that is, some eleven months before the present incident. But neither of these dates signifies anything of public interest or of importance in Ezekiel's career, as far as we know. We are unable, then, to offer any opinion on their appropriateness and genuineness but can merely note them as data for our final appraisal of the question.

Verses 2-3 give a characteristic, metrical oracle, simple and brief:

הלדרש אתי אתם באים
חי־אני אם־אדרש לכם

Is it to inquire of me you are coming?
As I live, I will not be inquired of by you!

This at least we can accept as genuine. But verses 4-5 run on in attractive form. And, even more arresting, the words in verse 5 immediately following the introduction start off in familiar style, giving a good three-beat stichos:

כיום בחרי בישראל

In the day that I chose Israel.

But then we are in difficulties; most of the rest of the verse, if it were claimed to be metrical, would necessarily scan in fours rather than threes. And if we try again, say in verse 7, a similar situation confronts us; we might regard the two first words as anacrusis and get then a good 3:3:3 line. But it will not go on into verse 8, except that presently we have verse 7 repeated there in a way that certainly is not Ezekiel's. So we might proceed, picking out supposed metrical lines here and there, but completely unable to isolate a unified, structural poem, such as we found, in chapters 4-5 and 7, that Ezekiel composed when his oracles exceeded the brief limits of most of his utterances. We are forced to the conclusion that here we have not poetry but merely elevated prose. But, then, is it Ezekiel's?

This would be a startling result, since by careful inductive methods we have found as yet that his utterances are characteristically poetic; such prose as we have from him is limited to introductions, or brief surveys in a sentence or so, of the attitude or comments of his compatriots. Still, we must be constantly on guard against a priori judgment; we must be consistently inductive. So what criteria can we bring to bear here? By careful selection we could evade the typical stylistic features of the commentator throughout verses 4-29 and so arrive at a prose passage which would not too seriously offend our feeling for Ezekiel's thought. But would we be justified in this course? Would not this be a priori criticism? And, further, the passage reaches no logical conclusion until it lands us fairly in the midst of material of which we can hold no opinion except of its indubitable spuriousness. And then we observe that the seemingly genuine question in verses 4-5 is copied almost verbatim from 22:2-3, where, as we have seen, it is genuine. And we should have recognized that this sort of secondary oracle, which chapter 20 undertakes to give, is not Ezekiel's method. Genuine passages occur with a metrical utterance, a prose instruction, and a following oracle. But this present passage is an afterclap, pure and simple. The oracle in verse 3 is complete and final; there is not the least occasion for Ezekiel to open the matter again in this way. So then the situation becomes clear. The genuine material is in verses 2-3 alone. But some commentator, feeling either that Ezekiel was too abrupt with the elders or that the situation offered excellent homiletic opportunities, fittingly appropriated a genuine introduction and wrote in a lengthy exposition of the grounds for divine rejection in the consistently bad conduct of the nation. He is a commentator quite distinct from the considerable number of these with whom we have become acquainted, for he uses few of their devices, develops his theme at length, and has appended his remarks so skilfully that only by careful study can his action be detected. And then others, following his lead, have further expanded the chapter. It may well seem remarkable that an oracle so brief has provided the basis for a relatively long chapter. It is scarce less notable that the chapter contains so little allusion to the oracle: only in verses 31 and 40 is it cited. But this is true homily, of a type more modern than the brief comments commonly written into the chapters. This preacher found a rich suggestion in Ezekiel's brief "text" and expounded and applied it in consistent logical development.

The content of his homily deserves attention. Here is a notable example of that self-criticism which has characterized Jewish thought for more than two millenniums. It made high contribution to the advance of religion in the insights of the prophets by which they were able to preserve their own and their people's faith in face of crushing disaster. But, age after age, the objectivity of the prophets has kept alive in Judaism a sense of the awful righteousness of God before which man's best conduct is so meager as to merit the divine chastening that the centuries of Israel's painful history have experienced in abundant measure. But in particular we have in this chapter that interpretation of the disasters of 597 and 586 B.C. which became at once the orthodoxy of Judaism and in considerable measure the impulse in its development. For in this arraignment of the nation's sins there was a vindication of the prophets' teaching and the occasion for its acceptance as Holy Writ. But, too, it was a stern warning for the future; it was a call to fence about Israel's conduct with legal guides and directions.

XVIII

CHAPTER 14

Analysis of this chapter is obvious; verses 1-11 deal ostensibly with a situation that parallels that of chapter 20, a visit of elders to consult Ezekiel; verses 12-23 discuss the position of righteous persons in a wicked land: a sort of corollary, it will be seen, to chapter 18, though the ideas are hung on the notion of the three fates of chapter 5. Both sections purport to be genuine, having the correct introductions; but that both have spurious commentary is apparent at a glance. In a degree higher than usual, they cite their originals; thus verse 3 is cited in 4 and 7 and alluded to in 5, 6, and 10; the alleged incident in verse 1 is referred to in 7 and 9. Likewise, the second section is full of repetitions of the theme of the three men and even a citation of their names.

Coming direct from chapter 20, the problem of the first section falls into familiar pattern. Verses 1-3 we may accept without debate as in the main genuine, but this original evidently stops at נכח פניהם ("before their faces"). The following rhetorical question anticipates the actual reply given in the succeeding verses; further, it is too much like 20:3 to be clear of the charge of spurious insertion. But a characteristic response, fittingly introduced with an imperative, though of the verb דבר ("speak"), not אמר ("say"), is contained in verse 4. Yet once again the end of the verse seems to be expanded; LXX certainly does not attest our present text, and significantly the commentary in verse 7 likewise knows nothing of it. However, the entire matter is complicated by the existence in verse 6 of a second response likewise introduced by an imperative, and this of the usual אמר ("say"). Further, the content of the utterance is obviously metrical. So what are we to conclude in such excess of resources? Superficially, it might seem that either response can be defended as genuine. And the content of verse 6 might follow immediately on verse 4 with fitting logic and development. But the introductory phrase is a serious obstacle in the way of this. It must instead be recognized that the verses are two independent applications of the oracle. It is barely possible that both originated with Ezekiel; he might on occasion have given different interpretations of his utterances to different groups. But in reality this is pure speculation; we have no parallel to this situation. Numerous secondary explanations of this kind exist, but elsewhere they are all spurious. We are compelled to admit the probability that such is the case here as well. And then we are compelled, as on not a few occasions hitherto, to invoke other criteria than poetic form in decision between two metrical lines. First, then, it will be recalled that Ezekiel's normal introduction of these interpretations is with the imperative אמר ("say"); indisputably genuine ones do exist with דבר ("speak"), but they are a minority. That is, Ezekiel's usage provides, not an absolute dictum as to the originality of verse 6, but nonetheless a clear basis of preference for it. Then the poetry of verse 4 is heavy and crude, so much so, indeed, that if one should argue that it is mere prose, there could be little reply. But verse 6 runs neatly and effectively as two lines in 2:2 measure. Verse 4 may seem to have an advantage, however, in that it is addressed to "them," that is, evidently, to the elders with whom verses 1-3 have been concerned; while, on the other hand, verse 6 is directed to "the House of Israel." But whatever cogency there may be in this is soon dissipated by the fact that verse 4 likewise turns promptly to "the House of Israel." Finally, the content of verse 4 is but a pale repetition of the wording of the oracle in a way that is characteristic not of the prophet but of the commentators. So our decision is dictated for us. And the genuine material sets up in this fashion:

האנשים האלה העלו   גלוליהם על־לבם
ומכשל עונם נתנו   נכח פניהם
לכן אמר אל־בית ישראל כה אמר יהוה
שובו והשיבו   מעל גלוליכם
ומעל כל־תועבותיכם   השיבו פניכם

These men have brought up
   their idols into their heart,
and temptations to their sins have they set
   right before their faces.

Therefore say to the House of Israel, Thus says the Lord,
   Turn back and repent
      of your faith in hateful idols,
   And from all your abominations
      turn away your faces.

As in the case of the parallel in chapter 20, it is hopeless to undertake to date the incident, save that its temper consorts better with what we know of Ezekiel prior to 586 than after. That the improbability of the elders' consulting him in that period is not valid we shall see before we have completed our study of his work.

The second section is equally difficult. However, the limit of any possible, genuine material is quite clear. We noted in our study of chapter 5 the inappropriateness of the threat of wild beasts for the siege of Jerusalem. This meets us here in verse 21, which, in spite of all its air of verisimilitude, must be adjudged the work of the "shamed" commentator who reveals himself in verse 22. The observation may have validity only for these concluding verses, for one gains the impression that they are a commentator's summary of the preceding. And when the wild beasts are previously mentioned in verse 15, they are specifically connected with the ravaging of a land, not a city. Still these subsections beginning in verses 15, 17, and 19 are of a different syntactical structure from verses 13-14; whereas their uniformity within themselves leads us to expect that, if by the same author as 13-14, these latter should have harmonized with the stereotyped model of the others. More significant, however, is it that verses 15 ff. are clearly prose, while verse 13, at least, is characteristic of Ezekiel's poetry. We need not hesitate to conclude that the original material does not go beyond verse 14; the rest is commentators' expansions under the influence of the "four fates" of 5:17.

Even so, we are by no means out of troubles, for verse 14 does not lend itself to a result acceptable as typically Ezekiel's. A major difficulty is that metrical organization would demand the three names be taken as a single stichos, hence presumably of three poetic beats. Ezekiel's poetic muse seems to nod occasionally, but never yet have we caught it sound asleep! To compound a line of nothing but three names is mere poetic hack work. But what shall we do? Who, then, were "these three men"? Further, verse 13 appears to fall readily into the familiar 3:2 or 3:3 measure of Ezekiel, but, apart from the citation of these names, verse 14 is very heavy and its "feet" go limping. It is possible that it has been considerably corrupted. But LXX helps none, and the yet earlier evidence of the commentators, little if at all, for they do no more than cast doubt on the originality of the initial verb.

But now we try a flank attack on the position. The passage is reminiscent of the story in Genesis, chapter 18, of Abraham's pleading for Sodom: "Wilt thou consume the righteous with the wicked?....That be far from thee..... Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" And is it mere coincidence that the narrative leaves only three survivors from the wicked city. The scurrilous sequel related of them may qualify the ascription of "righteousness," but in any case there were just three spared on the grounds of their better character. Now was it Ezekiel who thus commented on his Book of Genesis, or was it some other pious Jew? Another parallel may suggest an answer for us. The utterance in Jer. 15:1-4 is in content very similar to this passage in Ezekiel. There, likewise, ancient worthies are mentioned as unable to save the nation by their righteousness; but, instead, it is to be destroyed by sword, famine, exile, and (vs. 3) savage beasts and birds. We may not at this time enter into the question of the genuineness and unity of these verses. It is tempting to see in them another case of Ezekiel's dependence on his great contemporary. But, first, it must be noted that the names "Moses" and "Samuel" occur in a prose context. Then by a sudden flash of insight we realize the true situation: Ezek. 14:14 is prose. It now appears absurd to have delayed so long over the issue. And this clears up all our textual problems with it--or rather it frees us from textual problems, for it would have demanded severe and unattested deletions to have found poetry here. So we accept the verse as it is, recognize it to be prose--and spurious! The oracle is only verse 13:

בן־אדם
ארץ כי תחטא־לי   למעל מעל
ונטיתי ידי עליה   ושברתי לה מטה־לחם
ושלחתי־בה רעב   והכרתי ממנה   אדם ובהמה

Son of man,
    When a land sins against me
        doing dishonor,
    I will stretch out my hand over it
        and break its staff of bread,
    and I will send famine into it
        and cut off from it
        both man and beast.

Here, then, we have another illuminating case of the commentators' treatment of Ezekiel's oracles. They have given us at this point not so much false exegesis as a complete departure from the thought of the original. Ezekiel had merely reiterated his common threats of impending punishment upon the wicked land, employing a favorite idea of famine, but some commentator improved the occasion to insert a remark on the helplessness of three great figures of antiquity in such a situation to deter divine vengeance. And so the passage was built up with expansions of this idea into one of the notable enunciations of the doctrine of individualism in the Book of Ezekiel. Unlike the related passages in chapters 18 and 33, there is here no original basis for the doctrine. We see how slight, then, was Ezekiel's total emphasis on it and how rudimentary its development. It is some loss to us also that Noah, Daniel (or Danel?), and Job disappear from Ezekiel's utterances--a loss, however, fully recompensed by the solid gain that attainment of truth always brings. It was some later religious writer who celebrated these men as outstanding in Israel's history. Unfortunately, he has left us no clues to show how late he is to be dated.

The occasion of the original oracle is not clearly indicated. It is tempting to understand it as relevant to the advancing scarcity of food in the siege of Jerusalem. But second thought indicates an earlier time. We have already found occasion to invoke the parallel of Jer. 14:1-6 in our study of Ezek. 22:23 ff. The similarity of the present oracle is still closer. It seems probable that we are to understand it as referring to the same drought. But whether Ezekiel was influenced by Jeremiah is not clear.

XIX

CHAPTER 16

This, the longest chapter in the Book of Ezekiel, unlike many of half its bulk, is of a single theme. Characteristic formulas of secondary beginnings occur at verses 35-36, 43, and 59, but nonetheless the large unbroken blocks of ostensibly unified material are a feature distinct from the greater number of chapters of the book.

Waiving this problem for the moment, however, we may analyze the chapter thus: verses 1-22, the foundling girl, her upbringing and adulteries; 23-34, a second account of the latter, with comments thereon; 35-43, her punishment; 44-58, her lewd family, of which she is worst; and 59-63, promise for the future. It is apparent that this is not a logical development of the theme but rather a casual assembly of diverse comments on it. Yet, further, each of these sections is subject to subdivision, with similar suspicions arising as to the standing of some passages within their context. Thus Cooke with some plausibility terminates a section at verse 14, which then, it is to be noted, concludes with the proper final formula. However, this is not a culmination of the thought, which rather compels us to go on. But verse 21 is only a repetition of the content of verse 20, and verse 22 is a disconnected comment. Similarly, verses 30-34 stand apart from the description of the wicked conduct; they, too, are emotional ornamentation. Verses 40-42 have lost their clue; one does not bring up a great host to stone a single woman, however bad she may be. On the contrary, these verses move from the symbolic to the actual and refer to the destruction of Jerusalem. Still further lines of separation could be discovered if it were profitable to follow them; for example, verse 48 is a sort of new beginning to reinforce the notion just mentioned that Jerusalem was worse than Samaria or Sodom. But we must attack our primary problem.

Like chapter 20, it is notable how far we proceed before meeting commentators' citations. And they are rare even then. Verses 22, 42, and 60 allude to the woman's early life as recounted in verses 4 ff., the former with more definiteness, for it quotes a word from verse 6; verse 45 cites the statement in verse 3 of the mixed ancestry of the woman. So, unfortunately, the commentators give us little help in isolating the original. Our survey will have sufficed, however, to intimate that we must look for it only in verses 1-22. Still, if the genuine here is as brief as usual with Ezekiel, even this restricted scope still leaves us in much the traditional plight of looking for a needle in a haystack! One point we may fasten on, though, as possibly affording some clue; that is verse 9. It seems to form a sort of new beginning, such as might cut our material to this point. What has this washing to do with the development of the theme? Herrmann, followed by Cooke, understood this to be menstrual blood, a notion which we may dismiss as just so much disgusting absurdity. Such cleansing was not the responsibility of a husband. If the verse belongs rightly at this point, then the story has returned on itself, repeating the cleansing of the newborn child implied in verse 6. But the most simple course is to consider that verse 9 has become misplaced from an original position immediately after verse 6. Then the account develops logically from the finding of the child and the attentions called for at that time, through her growth to maturity and the clothing of the bride, to the loose ways that she then developed. So our clue dissipates!

But it has been well pointed out that the passage is an application of the folk tale of the abandoned baby, common through the ancient world. Here is the Hebrew Romulus reared not by a she-wolf but by the Lord himself. Or, in Babylonian terms, it is Sargon, cared for by the irrigator, until in maturity he was loved by Ishtar. But were all children of mixed ancestry thrown out to wallow in blood? Or, putting it the other way around, were the famous abandoned babies in ancient folk tale of mongrel breed? More simply, the alleged fact that Jerusalem was begotten of Amorite-Hittite parentage is quite irrelevant to the legend of the abandoned baby!

One of the excellent features of Cooke's commentary is his generous recognition beyond others, except Hölscher, of the presence of poetry in the Book of Ezekiel. And in this chapter 16 he is true to form. Diverging a little from Hölscher's reconstruction, he finds that verses 2-14 contain ten original strophes (strictly eight and a double one) generally triads of 2:2 measure, though the meter varies to threes, and one of the strophes is of but two lines and a half and the last two are couplets. Obviously for this result he is obliged to have recourse to numerous emendations, most of which have no better support than the demands of his metrical system. But it is an impressive result; though, as noted already, verse 14 is no logical termination. Yet Cooke himself recognizes that the same methods would carry his "poem" into verse 15 or further; he is too much impressed by the terminal formula in verse 14, which, however, has frequently been intruded spuriously into Hebrew poetry. Still, whatever is to be our final judgment, Cooke's results will not stand in their present form. One looks askance at his treatment of verse 5, where he arbitrarily deletes עליך, and inserts a phrase from 5:11 which everywhere in Ezekiel is of spurious origin. And the succession of acts on behalf of a newborn infant recorded in verse 4, from which Cooke secures two of his lines for the triad at this point, are highly reminiscent of the cataloguer; we have not found Ezekiel thus tediously inserting lists into his concise poems. The same applies to verses 10-12, which again Cooke reads direct into his results, except for arbitrary deletions of occasional words. Further, he did not observe, or more probably did not know how to interpret, the fact that in verse 13 "broidered-work" as he translates רקמה is appended out of its former sequence, and apparently as an afterthought, suggesting that it was not original in verse 10 but inserted to harmonize with its intrusion there.

However, it is admittedly easier to criticize than to offer a convincing alternative. But Cooke would have been safer if he had striven less to maintain the 2:2 measure, recognizing rather, as he does at times, that this easily changes to 3:2 or even the familiar 3:3; there is no need to make arbitrary deletions in the interests of metrical uniformity. Granting a high measure of subjective selection from the cataloguing verses, and admitting grave uneasiness at many other points, the following is suggested as an experiment; it has at least the advantage of a consistent structure, though varying meter:

ביום הולדת אותך   לא כרת שרך
ותשלכי על־פני השדה   בגעל נפשך

ואעבר עליך ואראך   מתבוססת בדמיך
ואשטף דמיך מעליך   ואסכך בשמן

ותרבי ותגדלי   ותבא בעת עדים
שדים נכנו   ושערך צמח

ואעבר עליך ואראך   והנה עתך עת דדים
ואפרש כנפי עליך   ואשבע לך ותהיי־לי

ואנעלך תחש   ואחבשך בשש
ואכסך משי   ואעדך עדי

ותבטחי ביפיך   ותזני על־שמך
ותשפכי את־תזנותיך   על־כל עובר

In the day of your birth
your navel was not cut;
but you were cast out in the field
in contempt of your life.

Then I passed by you, and saw you
wallowing in your blood,
and I rinsed your blood from you
and anointed you with oil.

And you grew and became mature
and came into the time of love;
your breasts were formed
and your hair grew.

Then I passed by you, and saw you,
and lo, your time was the time of love!
And I spread my garment over you
and made a solemn declaration; and you were mine.

I shod you with *tahash*
and girt you with fine linen;
and clothed you in costly stuff
and adorned you with jewels.

But you were confident in your beauty
    and traded lewdly on your repute,
pouring out your harlotries
    to all who passed by.

But, apart from its form, what advantage has this over Cooke's? For it will be soon realized that it lies open to adverse criticisms. No good purpose can be served by detailing these, for the entire reconstruction is offered purely as a foil to Cooke's and Hölscher's efforts; but the method is so obviously *metri causa* that it results in a product too frequent in Old Testament criticism--a poem made, not found. Yet the point is that, with proper care to avoid the errors of Cooke's method, this is about the best that can be done. It is doubtful that the effort should be carried further, for the material in verses 16-19 bears some slight marks of the commentator; within verses 1-15 certain words or phrases here omitted perhaps merit inclusion. But this is of small moment, for in the end one comes along this line to a highly subjective result.

But one important omission from the above text will perhaps have been noticed; that is the summary statement of Jerusalem's ancestry, in verse 3. It is a good 2:2 couplet:

מכרתיך ומלדתיך   מארץ הכנעני
אביך האמרי   ואמך חתית

Your origin and your birth
    were of the land of Canaan;
your father was Amorite,
    your mother Hittite.

Here at last we have something solid in a chapter of perplexity. This is genuine beyond a doubt.

But what shall we say of the rest, whether in Cooke's reconstruction, in that tentatively presented above, or in some other which perhaps defies complete isolation? The uncertainty as to form and the impossibility of finding a clear stretch of indisputable original poetry are gravely disturbing facts. And also the comment offered above that the alleged mongrel ancestry of Jerusalem has nothing intrinsic to do with the legend of the abandoned baby, though lacking finality, demands serious consideration. Moreover, verse 4 gives the impression, unobtrusive yet inescapable, of a new beginning; it has the air of commentators' addition now so familiar to us in these chapters of Ezekiel. It is of some relevance also to adduce the two parallels that, like verse 2, undertake to "make Jerusalem know her abominations"; they are 22:2 and 20:4. The former, we have noted, is genuine, and the latter copied from it.[1] And this spurious use then proceeds practically immediately with the word ביום ("in the day") followed by an infinitive: precisely the construction we find here. Have we discovered one and the same commentator? It is a suspicion that will not be lightly set aside. But as well the common usage of Ezekiel comes into consideration, greatly strengthening the case; his oracles are light, brief, and suggestive. Under stress of the imminent horror of the fall of the city, he wrote the longer poem contained in chapter 7; but this is unusual. It would be typical of his normal methods to say no more than is contained in verse 3; it was sufficient suggestion of his city's abominations to declare merely its mongrel and pagan ancestry. Finally, the analogy of chapter 20, so recently studied, not to mention several others more remote in our investigation, prepares us fully to find in this long chapter no more than a bare nucleus of genuine utterance. It is freely conceded that this is one more of the chapters encountered at this point in our study where final criteria for analysis are lacking; yet the concurrence of the above considerations indicates that the best course is to accept as genuine only verses 1-3. Nothing can be said with any definiteness as to the date of the brief utterance. As in many other cases, we can do no more than assign it vaguely to the period prior to the invasion.

It has been mentioned that verse 22 alludes to verse 2; then it passes to the nakedness of the abandoned baby and quotes a phrase from verse 6. But we go all the way to verse 45 for citation of the genuine statement in verse 3; apparently its use of the verb געל ("feel loathing") is an allusion also to verse 5. The ensuing comparison with Sodom and Samaria will at once suggest chapter 23, to which we now turn. The concluding verses are not unlike the end of chapter 20 in their mixed reproof and promise, with a strong suggestion of the "shamed" commentator.

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[1] So, too, 23:36, which uses, however, a different verb and does not follow with the infinitive construction.

XX

CHAPTER 23

The similarity of this to chapter 16 is more than that of its theme. It is like it in structure as well. It belongs in this regard with chapters 18 and 20 also. But, notwithstanding its single theme, it is closer to the common run of chapters in the frequency of its fresh beginnings introduced by לכן ("therefore"), לכן כה אמר יהוה ("therefore thus says the Lord"), or the like. Its major divisions correspond obviously to these clues, for it falls readily into the following sections: (*a*) 1-31, (*b*) 32-35, (*c*) 36-45, and (*d*) 46-49. The first of these subdivides thus: 1-4, the general statement; 5-10, the career of Oholah; 11-31, that of Oholibah. Apparently, all three of these are composite; the third clearly divides at verse 21, and verses 28-31 are a repetition of 22-27. Section (*b*) is commonly recognized as in part poetic; but it is expanded by commentary in verse 35. The third section, (*c*), is certainly by a different hand from that in 5-21, for it repeats the other's ideas in different words. It is of some interest, in view of our problem in chapter 20, to observe that this commentator also quotes (vs. 36) the introduction from 22:2. The chapter then concludes with a pale and innocuous homily on the theme already so fully treated, though with little verbal affinity.

We may take it as obvious that we have a genuine oracle in the chapter. But this easy step only lands us then in acute difficulty; for what is the oracle? It opens auspiciously in verse 2, but with difficulty confronting us immediately, for it seems to offer a 2:3 line. This structure is not infrequent, though apparently rare at the beginning of a poem in Ezekiel's style. Probably, then, we are to accept the evidence of LXX and transfer היו ("were") to follow נשים ("women"), thus giving a suitable 3:2 line. But how are we to treat verse 3? There is in part a balanced structure to the verse that prompts us to postulate a poetic nucleus. But what is to be deleted and on what evidence? For LXX is of slight help; that it was too late to record the original text is shown by its support of קרובים ("near") in verse 5. Is not the situation rather that this notorious conduct of the women in Egypt would have prevented the Lord from taking them? It is too much to postulate here a divine Hosea. And, too, their lewdness comes at this point as an anticipation, for it is the logical and detailed theme of verses 5 ff.: after the women were taken by the Lord, then they fell away into loose conduct. We shall do well to regard verse 3 as spurious in entirety, inserted here by the commentator who in chapter 20 developed the wickedness of Israel in Egypt, or by someone influenced by him. Verse 4*b* is obviously a gloss, apparently the last statement in 4*a* also, for the sons and daughters bear meager part in the sequel, being mentioned, but in a casual way, only in verses 10 and 25. If we may argue *metri causa*, probably we may ignore ושמותן ("and their names") also; apparently it was inserted for purposes of clarity after the intrusion of verse 3 had broken the sequence. Then verse 5 will scan, though, as a tristich in an otherwise distich structure, it is probably expanded; the third member is certainly less convincing than the others. But verses 6-10 are prose; besides they reek of the commentators' methods. We pick up a metrical line again in verse 11, though, as in verse 5, the third stichos is apparently added. The rest of this section of the chapter is so obviously prose and commentary that we need not hesitate to conclude that we have thus uncovered the oracle in approximately original form. The absence of stated punishment would be characteristic of Ezekiel; in any case, it is hopeless to seek to find genuine material in verses 22 ff., where the chapter turns to appropriate punishment. But let us withhold judgment a moment.

בן־אדם
שתים נשים היו   בנות אם־אחת
אהלה הגדולה   אהליבה אחותה   ותהיין לי

ותזן אהלה תחתי   ותעגב על־מאהביה
ותרא אחותה אהליבה   ותשחת עגבתה ממנה

Son of man:
Two women there were,
daughters of one mother:
Oholah the elder,
Oholibah her sister;
and they were mine.

But Oholah went from me in lewdness
and vented her passion on her lovers;
then Oholibah, her sister, saw
and gave rein to worse passion than hers.

In the second section of the chapter, as already mentioned, critics freely assert the presence of poetry. As usual, however, they accept it without serious attention to criticism. The rendering of 32b by LXX is odd; it is little better than loose paraphrase. In 33b it has the one word ἀφανισμοῦ for שמה ושממה ("horror and desolation"); probably a dittography has occurred here. In 33c it omits שמרון ("Samaria"); obviously, the entire phrase is a gloss, a judgment to be passed on 34b as well; and, as LXX shows, on ושדיך תנתקי ("and your breasts you shall tear") in 34a. Internal considerations would lead us to suspect the originality of 32b and of all of 33; what necessity of enlarging on the dire consequences of drinking the cup of Samaria? Everyone knew what that was. However, we may not urge the point; the important matter is that we find here one, or two, couplets, according as one may choose between the above courses.

We noted above that verse 35 is commentary. But what are we to say of the poem? The relation of its thought to that of the first section of the chapter is apparent; further, it has some similarity of form, since it is poetic. But other facts offset the significance of these: for the first feature is merely the common characteristic of all the commentators; and we shall yet see that some of these are poets in their own right. But, as well, the meter of the oracle in verses 2-11 is clearly 3:3, while this poem is 3:2. Although these measures do interchange, yet a complete shift of structure such as demanded here is, to say the least, disturbing. Still worse is the sudden shift from the objectivity of third-person narrative in the oracle to second-person singular address at this point. Similar is the introduction of the figurative "cup," for which there is no logical preparation in the oracle. But all these features reduce to irrelevance if we take verses 32-34 in their present sequence; the passage is a natural and not illogical expansion of the theme followed from verse 22. This does not mean that the authorship is common; on the contrary, the differences are sufficient to indicate that some new commentator has added his poetic notes to the recension of this chapter current in his days. So we leave verses 32-34 just where we find them, and in turn indorse our decision a little ago that the original oracle is the poem discovered in verses 2-11.

The exposition of the oracle is obvious, as is usual in the work of Ezekiel. The commentators are patently right in identifying the women as Samaria and Jerusalem. We have here, then, one of the few valid references by the prophet to the Northern Kingdom. His more mild judgment on its evils affords scant basis, however, for the theory that he was himself of Israelite origin.[1] Ezekiel's purpose in this utterance is not immediately clear. Apparently, he aimed at nothing more than to demonstrate the badness of the people of Jerusalem, recognizing, we must believe, that conviction of sin must precede repentance. The date must be left undetermined, save that the tone of stern reproof accords well with his work during the reign of Zedekiah. As we have reasoned elsewhere, the absence of allusion to the invasion of Judah may suggest a time well before 588 B.C.

The two remaining sections of the chapter will delay us briefly. That verses 36-45 are of independent origin is evident in their different treatment of the punishment of the wicked sisters; indeed, a first difference is that, while the two were treated separately above--the punishment of Oholah in verses 9-10 and that of Oholibah in 22 ff.--here, on the other hand, they are condemned together. The previous commentator had called for a great mixed host of Assyrians, Babylonians, Chaldeans, and "Pekod, Shoa, and Koa," but here the assembly are vaguely from afar, though apparently predominantly Sabaeans (vs. 42). Here, too, the denunciation is delivered mainly in third person (though confusion in this regard perhaps evidences a composite structure of the section), as against second above. It may be that the change of destroyers is indicative of the later period which, in harmony with observations on other chapters, we are ready to postulate of this section since it follows the other. In harmony with this, it has allusions to passages in other chapters. Verse 36 cites 22:2, which we have already seen to be a favorite with commentators; verse 38 alludes to the spurious material in chapter 20.

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[1] See, e.g., Matthews, _Ezekiel_ (1939), p. xxi; James Smith, _The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel_ (1931), pp. 53-71.

There is little to be said about verses 46-49 except that in their threat of a great host to stone these lewd women they seem influenced by 16:40.

The relations of the spurious comments in section (a) to the developed theory of Israelite history in chapter 20 will be apparent. It is a striking contrast to the usual view, popularized by the prophets, that Israel's early days had been of high religious devotion. These late writers in chapters 20 and 23 take the opposite view, boldly charging that even in Egypt the nation's conduct had been scandalously unfaithful and idolatrous.

Possibly one is justified in delaying for a minor comment. The word קרובים ("near") in verses 5 and 12 is evidently to be read, on the basis of verse 23, קרואים ("called"). Then, in the two latter cases, it occurs in a list of Assyrian officials in such a manner that it also should be a title. This is cogent corroboration of the view that the word as occurring in Num. 1:16, 16:2, and 26:9 is actually the title of a Hebrew official.[2]

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[2] Cf. my note in AJSL, LVII, 95-97.

XXI

CHAPTERS 38-39

Recent critical opinion is practically unanimous that these chapters are spurious. Matthews makes a concession which would be humorous if offered as a conscious mitigation of the situation; he claims that 39:25-29 is a genuine oracle given late in Ezekiel's career and expressing his hope for reconstruction. He is correct in his observation that the theme of this section has but slight connection with the Gog of Magog prophecy; however, he has failed to note that it is written clearly as a commentary on it: it is typical of such expansions in the Book of Ezekiel in its use of characteristic words from the two chapters. So this slight amelioration fails us; there is no genuine oracle at this point. The chapters, otherwise, are adjudged in entirety a late eschatological intrusion in the book. There has been a strong tendency to identify two authors in them, a view which Bertholet still favors. But Hölscher believed he could explain away the division; and he is followed cordially by Cooke. Yet, neither has any hesitation in repudiating the Ezekielian authorship.

But why all this special attention to these chapters? They are typical, run-of-the-mine passages of the Book of Ezekiel. In their united theme they are similar to chapters 23, 16, 20, and 18, to reverse the order in which we have followed them. And with their repeated fresh beginnings introduced frequently by לכן ("therefore") or כה אמר יהוה ("thus says the Lord"), with their summaries that after certain hideous bloody conduct "they shall know that I am the Lord," and, finally, with their succession of independent comments, pyramided one on another, they are completely and familiarly of a piece with a score of chapters in this book. In two regards alone is there significant difference, primarily in the eschatological flavor of the content of these chapters, and then in their use several times of היום ההוא, ("that day"), a feature probably related to the other.

But this is not all. We must further fly in the face of orthodox criticism. If our observations hitherto have meant anything valid at all, we have here a genuine oracle! There is no possibility of evading it. The features of the genuine Ezekiel are clear and indisputable. Just as the several chapters of united theme that we have studied recently, these begin with an oracle of Ezekiel's, which then serves as the basis for a lengthy, spurious exposition with accumulated comments filling the rest of the two chapters. It is futile to laugh off the situation with the rhetorical question, What had Ezekiel to do with Gugu of Lydia? Too often we have made our ignorance a criterion for subjective results. Our concern is first to find what Ezekiel actually said; later we can perplex ourselves with the problem of what he meant. The introductory formula in 38:1 is familiar to the point of tedium; its genuineness can no longer be questioned; it has become almost an index of the presence of an utterance by Ezekiel. But also verse 2, with its בן־אדם ("son of man"), and instruction to "set your face against _____ and prophesy against him," is likewise familiar from a considerable number of chapters. And after the appropriate culmination in verse 3, directing the prophet to say "Thus says the Lord," we move into a typical poetic oracle. Here is genuine material beyond any possibility of doubt. Our only problems are, as usual, the isolation of the oracle and then its dating and exposition.

The older view which took ראש as a proper name paralleling Tubal and Mesheck is out of the question. Cooke is certainly right in his opinion that נשיא ("prince") and ראש ("head") are duplicates and that the latter is the original. In other words, נשיא is a gloss on the unusual ראש. The view receives corroboration from the metrical demands of 3b, which would be overloaded by retention of both words. This use of ראש was apparently a current title in lands in the Semitic penumbra, just as it is today. And Ezekiel, in speaking of a foreign prince, used a dialectic term, possibly in vogue in his land.

Verse 4 is not easy to unravel. It is apparent that its latter part is the work of the cataloguer; it is not poetry but a mere list of words. But even the first part will not fall readily into poetic form. But now the assistance of LXX becomes invaluable; it reads *καὶ συνάξωσε καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν δύναμίν σου.* Any uncertainty as to whether this represents ושובבתיך ("and I will turn you back") or והוצאתי אותך ("and I will bring you out") is settled by the rendering of the former by *συνάξω* in 39:2. But the striking fact is the complete omission of any equivalent for ונתתי חחים בלחייך ("and I will put hooks in your jaws"). However, this is a trite formula and quite out of harmony with the situation represented in the verb שובבתי. This expresses military defeat only. But the hooks in the jaws go beyond this to complete subjection or captivity; clearly the phrase is secondary. But the oracle goes no further. The sequel proceeds with a prosy catalogue of peoples and equipment, then moves on into the certainly spurious account of doings after many days, in the end of the times (vs. 8). And it is futile to seek genuine material elsewhere in the two chapters; except for 39:1-2, which to our good fortune quotes the oracle almost entire, the chapters are a late and still later accumulation of comments on the theme thus sketched so briefly. The notable fact is, however, that most of this is false commentary. For the oracle certainly threatens a defeat of Gog and his army; but the commentary, seizing on הוצאתי rather than שובבתי, develops the idea that the Lord will summon out these barbarous hosts, only later to destroy them in his own land. The oracle is a single tristich line:

הנני אליך גוג ראש משך ותבל ושובבתיך ואת־כל־חילך

Behold, I am against you, Gog,
    chief of Meshech and Tubal;
    and I will turn you back, and all your host.

But exegesis is not easy. The oracle seems to confuse two distinct facts: the obvious connection, if not identity, of the name Gog with Gugu, and the location of Meshech and Tubal. No purpose can be served by reopening the problem of the latter; it suffices that by this natural identification prince and people must, if relevant to Ezekiel's time, be separated by many hundreds of miles. Obviously, the prophet never intended this; nor are we to take the easy line of assuming that he was notably weak on geography. For certainly he did not intend the name "Gog" to be taken in its literal historic sense. The significance of Gugu of Lydia in Near Eastern politics had passed a couple of generations before Ezekiel's time. On the other hand, the prophet's career cannot have overlapped with that of Croesus. The name cannot have any relevance to rulers of Lydia; it must be purely symbolic. And this carries the implication that the names of his people are likewise. The most we may deduce is that the oracle is directed against some ruler of northern, ostensibly semibarbarian, people.

Now we recall that through the first half of the sixth century the Medes were improving their advantage won by the allied success at Nineveh, and in the middle eighties their aggressions had taken them as far as the Halys River. Their drawn battle with the Lydians in May, 585, is famous. But this did not terminate their imperial designs on nearer Asia. Indeed, the success of Cyrus toward the west was but a continuation of earlier Median aggression. Such must be the situation to which Ezekiel here refers. For some reason, he opposed these Median designs. It may be that his criticisms of his people's struggle with Nebuchadrezzar carried him to a full pro-Babylonian position, as in the case of Jeremiah. He, too, may have felt that the Lord had given all these lands into the hand of the Babylonian king; and for anyone, Mede or whoever else, to threaten Babylonian interests was opposition to the purposes of God. The view must, it is freely admitted, be put forward with hesitation; but, if approximately correct, it constitutes a solemn commentary on the too frequent assurance of the religious leader that his "inspiration" is valid for any and all technical departments of life--and so he makes himself absurd talking ex cathedra about matters of which he is profoundly ignorant. The reference in the oracle to "Gog's" army carries the implication of some definite expedition rather than a general situation, and this would accord with a frequent feature of prophecy. One is tempted, then, to speculate that Ezekiel may be here speaking of the very expedition mentioned just now, which in May, 585, came to an unexpected interruption through a solar eclipse. He would by this time have been a few months in Babylonia. And the familiarity here shown with the larger politics of the Near East may be one of the early fruits of his life there.

An analysis of the chapter is necessary before we push further in its study. The original oracle, then, is contained in verses 1-4*a*; verses 4*b*-6 supply an expansive interpretation; 7-9 are the call to attack the land of Israel; 10-13 are Gog's declaration of hostile intent; 14-16 are another prophecy of the attack; 17 is identification of Gog; and 18-23 are divine vengeance and overthrow.

The most tantalizing of these, and in some ways the most interesting, are verses 4*b*-6. Their list of peoples raises anticipation of clues as to the time and circumstances of the writer. But, actually, little can be ascertained. Elsewhere, Gomer occurs only in the genealogies in Gen. 10:2-3 and I Chron. 1:5-6; similarly, Togarmah is mentioned only there and in Ezek. 27:14. Mention of Cush is frequent, commonly paired with Egypt; in Isa. 43:3, with Seba. But catalogues of foreign nations such as here are somewhat rare. In Jer. 51:27 Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz are listed. But there is no true parallel to the extensive grouping we find in this passage. Indeed, it is a fact of some relevance that only Jer. 46:9 and two passages in Ezekiel, 27:10 and 30:5, are comparable. The Jeremiah passage and Ezek. 30:5 have Cush and Put and Lud (or, Ludim); Ezek. 27:10 lists Peras and Lud and Put. Into criticism of Jeremiah, chapter 46, we may not now enter; we waive the question whether or not these people were mentioned in the original account of the defeat at Carchemish. But, otherwise, it is a tempting speculation that the type and suggestion for this feature are to be recognized in the inscriptions of Darius I. Actually, *puta* and *kushu* occur in immediate sequence among the twenty-nine peoples over whom the king boasts supremacy.[1] Meager as is our evidence, it appears to indicate a date subsequent to Darius' inscription for these Old Testament passages; and, since the vogue of such ethnic listings did not become general, perhaps we are reasonable safe in suggesting that the date was not long after the time of Darius.

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[1] Weissbach, *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden* (1911), pp. 88-89. The point is slightly enhanced by

However, the next section, verses 7-9, contains quite definite indication of its period of origin. The land of Israel had been (היו [vs. 8]) a desolation but now for long was peacefully inhabited by Jews returned from "many peoples." This is patently long after Nehemiah's epochal work of rebuilding. And, harmonious with this clear reference, the gathering from "many peoples" is, as we have noted elsewhere, an allusion to conditions of the Diaspora. Now was this picture of brutal attack on peaceful, defenseless Israel a mere eschatological dream, or had the writer some actual historical circumstance in mind? While the latter view would accord better with the practice of the prophets, the eschatologists, on the other hand, are prone to give rein to their imaginations. We can say only that the view somewhat common since Winckler's study[2]--that we are to recognize Alexander in this chapter--would accord well with the intimations just now presented. However, the account of the motley host assembled by the invader (vs. 9) does not carry conviction as a description of Alexander's Macedonian and Greek forces. In the light of considerations that have become very familiar through the course of this study, it is not at all impossible that the reference here--if a reference at all--is actually to the wars of the Diadochi, perhaps even to the invasion of Palestine by Antiochus III. But this latter view must be entertained with caution, for there is still later material in these chapters,

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consideration of the word מגן in vss. 4 and 5. The confusion of the LXX evidence, together with the triteness of the expression צנה ומגן ("shield and small shield"), thus readily inducing glossing, favor the speculation that originally the passage had only מגן and that this was a proper name. Now in the Naksh-i-Rustam inscription the puta are immediately preceded by "Ionians who wear maginata on their heads." In the present passage this sequence is broken only by intrusion of Persians, who obviously would not occur in Darius' list.

[2] Altorientalische Forschungen (2d ser., 1898-1900), p.167.

and the date of the Septuagint translation would seem to provide a terminus ad quem, since papyrus No. 967 here supports our more familiar Greek text.

The independence of this section from both the preceding is attested, in addition to the evidences of dating, by its use of קהל for the army of "Gog" as against חיל in the oracle and כל־אגפיו עמים רבים ("all his troops, many peoples") by the earlier interpreter. However, the habits of the commentator are manifest in the citation of this latter phrase in verse 9. The occurrence of ימים רבים ("many days") also marks the section as distinct from anything yet encountered. But the following section, verses 10-13, is in close accord; an argument for united authorship would not be unreasonable. It seems improbable, however, in view of the careful, balanced style of these verses; in fact, verses 11-12 will scan, and verse 13 also, if one wishes to force the matter. The mood of the verses is different also; it undertakes to sketch the motivation of "Gog." Then, verses 14-16 differ yet again. They comment on the two preceding sections and even cite the word חיל from the oracle. But here the interest has swung from the cupidity of the invaders to the purposes of God. Verse 17 is quite distinct. Its late date is shown by its reference to the prophetic age as long past, but it shows no literary affinities with the rest of the chapter. Verses 18-23 describe the eschatological intervention of God. It is in full harmony with verses 14-16 and might be regarded as their sequel and culmination except that the repetition in 18a is heavy and meaningless if interjected into the midst of a unified passage of such intense action. It is better to regard it as an independent addition, and then the interesting feature is its use of phraseology from 14-16 and also the citation of אגפיו ("troops") and עמים רבים ("many peoples") from preceding sections.

Chapter 39 manifests these sections: verses 1-2, 3-10, 11-16, 17-21, 22-24, and 25-29. The first of these is a remarkably accurate quotation of rather more than half of the oracle, but with allusion also to verses 6 and 8 of chapter 38; as well it employs the word עלה ("go up"), which appears in 38:9 and then becomes the favorite for "Gog's" advance. The section 3-10 probably should be subdivided into verses 3-8 and 9-10, for a concluding formula occurs in 8, and 9-10 are a different theme. It is to be noted that in verse 6 there appears for the first time reference to the inhabitants of the maritime regions (ישבי איים) as among "Gog's" troops. Apparently these are actually the Greco-Macedonian forces of the Seleucids or Ptolemies. While verse 9 has מגן וצנה cited from the first interpreter in chapter 38, as well as bow and arrows mentioned in verse 3, it proceeds to add several other arms not heard of hitherto. Verse 10 alludes to 38:12-13. The *reductio ad absurdum* in 11-16 calls for no comment except that there is no cogent reason for postulating its unity with any other section. Verses 17-21 are a typical bit of eschatological horror; they have not a single definite reference to the context, though doubtless they were written for their present position. The same applies to verses 22-24, the purport of which is a theodicy. They are further evidence of the Israelite's continuing perplexity over the national disaster. Just as the early Christians were long on the defensive for the crucifixion of their divine Lord, so the Jews found it necessary to explain why the Lord had permitted his people to be overpowered, exiled, and dishonored. But, as well, the verses are prophetic in their dealing with the political situation. Out of the repression and subjection of the Greek period this writer hopes for the manifestation of the Lord's power in vindication of his people. The same is true of 25-29. Indeed, if one wish to contend for their common authorship, there is no cogent objection. But, in any case, these verses are of greatest critical interest of the entire chapter. For this writer the restoration is still future, though imminent. But such cannot be interpreted as indicating an early date, prior, say, to Nehemiah's rebuilding, for verse 27 has the familiar, telltale marks of the Diaspora. What then, when as we saw the author of 38:7-9 regards the restoration as accomplished? We are driven to an answer that is highly illuminating. The latter writer was in Palestine, enjoying the satisfactions of a relatively strong Jewish environment and the security of a Jewish state. The author of 39:25-29 was in the Diaspora, daily experiencing the indignities brought on his people because of their ancient iniquity that had culminated in the days of Ezekiel. He saw them scattered among the gentile population, far from the home of their fathers, and he looked forward wistfully to that great day when the Lord would balance his exile of his people by a corresponding gathering from among the Gentiles, leaving not a single one behind. The question must then arise, Were all the passages relevant to the Diaspora, which we meet so often in this book, written likewise by homesick Jews who from afar looked eagerly toward the land which the Lord had given to their fathers? And, if so, what does this imply as to the history of the Book of Ezekiel? The question is posed even by this one passage, of which the non-Palestinian origin is clear. By what steps and what process did the manuscripts of the Book of Ezekiel which were thus annotated somewhere in foreign lands come at length into the stream of textual tradition that was worked over by the scholars in Palestine, passed upon by Akiba and his contemporaries, and thus became the "Ezekiel" of subsequent centuries?

Yet one more question deserves attention. How was it that a passage of the accumulated eschatological imagery and horror, for which these two chapters are famous, came to be built up on the relatively innocuous basis of Ezekiel's typical oracle? It would seem that the answer is in that word "accumulation." The first commentator (38:4b-6) described a varied host; either he or a glossator employed the phrase עמים רבים ("many peoples") in regard to them. This then caught the imagination of the next writer (38:7-9), who added the imagery of desolation and obscuring cloud--and the rest was easy!

XXII

CHAPTER 25

This chapter will delay us but little. It is thin in content; and its critical significance, while not lacking, is meager. Its analysis is apparent; verses 1-7 are an ostensible oracle against Ammon; verses 8-11, against Moab, though some glossator has sought to confuse matters by inserting the word "Ammon" twice in verse 10; verses 12-14, against Edom; and verses 15-17, against Philistia.

The chapter opens auspiciously; verses 1-3a are typical genuine introductory phraseology. But then we come up with a sudden shock. This יען—לכן ("because....therefore") is certainly strange to all that we know of Ezekiel. We need waste no words; it is spurious. But we recall our findings in chapter 33, where the genuine introduction was separated from the oracle by commentary, sporadically preceding its text. So we are not surprised to find here that verse 4, after the spurious לכן, leads us into acceptable meter. The verse has apparently been expanded. Though lacking other support, we shall be tempted to delete למורשה ("for a possession") metri causa; and it is evident that וישבו טירותיהם בך ("and they shall pitch their encampments in you") and ונתנו בך משכנותיהם ("and they shall set their dwellings in you") are duplicates. Because of its unusual phraseology,[1] we choose the former: the other is evidently an explanatory gloss. Metrical structure can be traced in verse 5 also; but we are put on guard by its trite, spurious conclusion. Indeed, the ideas of the entire verse are too common; it is our best guess to ignore it completely as a commentator's expansion. Then the oracle is seen to be a couplet:

הנני נתנך לבני־קדם   וישבו טירותיהם בך
המה יאכלו פריך   והמה ישתו חלבך

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[1] The word טירה occurs seven times, though in a different sense in Ezek. 46:23.

> Behold, I am giving you to the Sons of the East,
> and they shall pitch their encampments in you;
> they shall eat your fruit,
> they shall drink your milk.

And so, Ezekiel uttered an oracle against the Ammonites. When? And why? The force of tradition has been so strong in distorting the purport of this oracle that it is necessary to remind ourselves clearly that verse 3*b* is commentary for which Ezekiel was in no way responsible. All he did was denounce destruction upon the Ammonites at the hands of the Bne Kedem. There is not a single suggestion in the genuine material that this was related in any way to the fall of Jerusalem and Ammonite conduct toward it--if they had any such conduct. And why should Ezekiel, now in far Babylonia, have wasted his time in bitter hatred for a wrong so trivial, when as a matter of fact he was himself following a similar course relevant to the destruction of Jerusalem? Rather, we must look for the occasion of this oracle in the depredation of Judah by Ammonites and others, late in the reign of Jehoiakim, as related in II Kings 24:2. It is Ezekiel's protest against a current and crucial evil.

Verses 6-7 are typical commentary. The three remaining sections of the chapter are likewise. Their interest is primarily that they evidence a late Jewish animosity against these small neighbor-nations. Occasions of friction were doubtless perennial; but as well Jewish memory remained very sensitive toward the tragic days of the death of the nation. For whatever reason they attributed to these folk a gloating satisfaction over the fall of the Jewish state. The Gedaliah episode would lead us to believe this was not entirely imaginary. But the final section of the chapter is of some interest also for its testimony to continued rivalry with the Philistines. With the victories of David and the minor warfare early in the divided kingdom these people dropped so completely out of Old Testament story that we are prone to forget that they continued their separate and unassimilated life, until at length in Greek times they figure once more as potent enemies of Israel. Indeed, this passage may reflect that late revived national vigor.

The introductory sequence יען—לכן, noted already in verse 3, recurs in the following sections. It is a new feature of the spurious material, deserving attention, since it will now appear several times. And the variations in the trite threat of knowing "that I am the Lord" (second person plural, vs. 5; second singular, vs. 7; and third plural, vss. 11, 14, 17) occurring in so brief a chapter must certainly evidence diverse hands.

XXIII

CHAPTER 35

This also is a chapter of slight importance, a fitting sequel to chapter 25, for its content, too, is vindictive hate expounded by several commentators. And critically it has similarities also, for here again is the introductory sequence, יען——לכן ("because....therefore"), and the same vacillation between second and third person in the prediction of knowing "that I am the Lord." Like chapter 25, also, it begins with irreproachable formulas and then starts out with הנני ("Behold, I") so common with Ezekiel. But we do not go far; for the end of verse 4 brings us up with the formula, "You shall know that I am the Lord"; and 4b is the trite redactional idea of making a שממה ("desolation"), as is also the concluding stichos of verse 3; 4a is little better, with its content quite similar to some of the spurious material of chapter 25. So the most we can claim as possibly genuine is the single distich line:

הנני אליך הר־שעיר   ונטיתי ידי עליך

> Behold, I am against you, Mount Seir,
> and will stretch out my hand over you.

This is very thin; and its second member is like the spurious 25:13, though this may mean no more than that the commentator there had this passage in mind. However, slight as is the passage, it is best to bow to tradition--rather, to the cogency of the genuine introduction--and grant, however grudgingly, that this is an original oracle.

Little can be said as to the occasion of the utterance. In our accepted text the Edomites are not among the culprits in II Kings 24:2, but the confusion of "Syrians" with Edomites is so familiar that it is not unreasonable that they were mentioned by the original account. Beyond this, we know of no special reason for Ezekiel's having denounced the Edomites; it is scarcely necessary to point out that the explanation in verses 5 ff. is of an unknown late origin.

The chapter further divides into verses 5-9, 10-13, and 14-15. But these add little to its interest; indeed, they are largely a repetition, in tedious redundancy, of indignation because the Edomites had rejoiced over the fall of Judah, and so their land was to be a desolation. It is possible that some or all of this is *vaticinium ex eventu*, referring to the murderous invasion of Edom celebrated in Mal. 1:2-4 and Isa. 63:1-6. Its mood, though, is one of wishful thinking rather than gloating realization. It is of value to note that verse 5 alludes to 21:30 and back of that to 7:2 ff.

XXIV

CHAPTER 29

We move on now into the first of the oracles, real or ostensible, against Egypt, though verses 17-20 have a sort of double connotation: against both Egypt and Tyre. This indicates the divisions of the chapter, for through verse 16 the theme is an elaboration of the announced hostility to Egypt. However, verse 21 is a sort of appendage promising symbolically some undefined good to Israel, "among them," presumably among Egypt and Tyre. It is introduced by ביום ההוא ("in that day"), which in this eschatological sense has otherwise been confined as yet to chapters 38-39.[1] Both sections are dated, the first in 10/10/12, which for an oracle against the Pharaoh is appropriate; though it is well to remind ourselves that in Old Testament criticism authentic does not mean genuine. The whole problem of the dates in this book we must take up at length when we have all the available evidence before us. However, at this time Judah had been for more than a year[2] bearing up as best it could against the overwhelming forces of invading Babylonians, and apparently Egyptian help had not yet arrived. The situation would doubtless impel some observers to conclude that none would ever come but that, instead, the hard-pressed Jews would be put off with fair words. It is to be observed that, beginning with the date, the usual formula is altered, in harmony with the changed syntax, to היה דבר יהוה אלי לאמר ("the word of the Lord came to me saying"). Otherwise, the introduction is normal, though it is possible that ועל-מצרים כלה ("and against Egypt all of it") in verse 2 is added, as in agreement with LXX we must consider דבר ("speak") in verse 3 to be. The oracle is commonly recognized to be poetic and, with certain deletions, to extend through 6*a*. This latter has, it is true, a concluding formula; but it is not Ezekiel's. Moreover, verse 5 is highly suspect; for the crocodile to be spread out in the wilderness, with the fish of the Nile, and then to fall on the (fertile) field, where it will never be gathered or collected, is surely a confusion of the sequence if not plain bathos. We may take it as settled that the oracle does not go beyond verse 4. And, likewise, 3*c* must go out; it is of tawdry content, is out of harmony with the circumstances of the oracle, and, further, has no support in the commentary, except the casual note 9*b*, which declares its character as an intrusion and serves actually to weaken rather than to help the case for its exemplar. Stretching reasonable possibilities to the limit, the oracle was apparently this:

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[1] The phrase occurs thirteen times all told in the Book of Ezekiel. In 24:27, 43:27, and 45:22 it connotes an ordinary futurity. In 20:6 and 23:38 and 39 it refers to the past. Here, and in 30:9 and the Gog passages, it is eschatological.

[2] II Kings 25:1.

הנני עליך פרעה   מלך מצרים
התנין הגדול הרבץ   בתוך יאריו

ונתתי חחים בלחיך   והעליתיך מתוך יאריך
ואת כל־דגת יאריך   בקשקשתיך תדבק

Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh,
    king of Egypt:
you great monster
    lying at ease in his Nile.

(And I will put hooks in your jaws
    and will bring you up from the depth of your Nile,
with all the fish of your Nile
    sticking in your scales.)

As remarked, this is a case of leaning backward to be fair to the tradition. The second couplet is highly dubious; the repetition of יאר ("Nile") is not like Ezekiel's concise style; and the first stichos is subject to the criticisms we raised against it when occurring in 38:4. Rather more cogent is the fact that neither the hooks, the fishes, nor the scales are recognized by the commentators in verses 5-16. On the whole, the probability is that Ezekiel merely voiced his conviction of divine disapproval of Pharaoh, as in the first couplet above, implying in the description that he was too indolent to give effective help to the desperate

Jews. It is interesting that the commentator in verses 6-7 (that he is a commentator is evident from his introductory phrases יען——לכן ["because....therefore"], now familiar from chaps. 25 and 35) connects this oracle with the expression of contempt attributed to the Rab Shakeh in II Kings 18:21 (and Isa. 36:6). But back of both surely we are to recognize Isaiah's disdainful comment that the strength of Egypt is a source of shame, for Egypt is but "Rahab-sit-still" (Isa. 30:2-3, 7). Yet this is not a case where we may level our familiar charge of false exegesis; on the contrary, this interpreter is correct. He elaborates the very thought that we see suggested with biting innuendo in Ezekiel's crisp words. Egypt is but a lazy monster lying idle and impotent in the sunny Nile. Indeed, if the suggestion just now offered be correct that the second couplet is spurious, possibly he had in mind not the terrible crocodile but the hippopotamus. And here is, then, the basis of his condemnation of Egypt, not vainglorying godlessness, as the commentator in verse 3*c* would have it, but indolence or at best ineffectiveness when the sore-pressed Jews stood in mortal need of help. Was this a case of Ezekiel's loyalties getting the better of his convictions? Or do we not rather here catch a glimpse of the deeper motivation of the prophets in the trying days of the eighth and seventh centuries, so like our own in their riot of brute force? Did not the great prophets recognize as fully as Habakkuk that Israel with all its shortcomings was morally far superior to the power-politicians of the empires? And how was it to help matters if and when Palestine with all other lands was ground into the dust by the insensible, unfeeling military machine of those days? Are we not to conclude from such brief hints as we have mentioned that the great prophets were every whit as bitterly opposed to the triumph of Assyria or Babylonia as are religious people today to that of the Axis brutality? And they would have welcomed a military force which could have opposed effective resistance to aggression. But, as clear-eyed students of their times, they surveyed the alignments and forces of their world and found no hope. Egypt, the one independent great power, was so self-satisfied in its isolationism remote beyond its desert barrier, or so inadequate in its thinking and action, that it was but a broken reed of greater menace to its allies than to its foes. So they were driven to believe that it was ordained of God. He had given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, and they should serve him. It is to their undying credit and our incalculable advantage that the prophets still maintained faith and hope. All was not lost; the righteousness of God still lived. There was no "totalitarianism" which might threaten Jewish freedom to teach the ways of the Lord to their children and their children's children. Religious persecution, as such, was to come later and make then its peculiar challenge to faith.

But we must return to mere criticism. Verses 8-16 are composite. There is a new beginning at verse 10, with the same ideas and same words repeated in the sequal. And verses 13-16 stand by themselves, though, apart from their strangeness and their new introduction, there is no clear evidence precluding their having been written by the preceding commentator. But the piecemeal character of much of the commentary in this book will incline us heavily, nonetheless, toward regarding this evidence as sufficient. In verse 12 the now familiar phraseology of the Jewish Diaspora is used of the prospective dispersion of the Egyptians. It is a slight clue, though probably sufficient to indicate a relatively late date. But verses 13-16 are equally late, for they depend on this idea. Strange as is the notion of an Egyptian Diaspora, the prophecy of their restoration after forty years is still more so. And they are, then, to be a mean kingdom, lower than any other; and so they will never again prove a false hope to Israel. This latter thought refers back to the circumstances of Ezekiel's time. But what are we to say of the Egyptian captivity and petty restoration? Is it merely wishful thinking, attributing to a great power the humiliations suffered by Judah, partially at least through its failure to help? Or is there some allusion to actual history? The Egyptian captivity has never been realized. But could there be a reference in mention of the "low kingdom" to the declining fortunes of the Ptolemies? In view of the evidence, supported by papyrus No. 967, that this passage was probably in the book at the time of its translation into Greek, this speculation becomes dubious. Probably we must accept the alternate view.

As is well known, the date 27/1/1 given in verse 17 is the latest in the book; even the last nine chapters of our present book claim no more than 25/1/10. Its reliability and appropriateness are beyond question, as Professor Olmstead has well shown.[3] Baal II of Tyre, 574-564, came to terms with Nebuchadrezzar, admitted Babylonian suzerainty, and henceforth business documents were dated in the reign of the Babylonian king. And, it is to be observed, the introductory formula in 17 is true to the type of Ezekiel's dated oracles. A serious difficulty arises, however, in the fact that the ostensible oracle in verse 19 is introduced by לכן כה אמר יהוה ("therefore thus says the Lord"). We have found that Ezekiel will occasionally use לכן ("therefore") with a following imperative אמר ("say") or דבר ("speak"). But the phrase occurring here is purely that of the commentator. Our predicament is resolved by LXX, however; it does not attest לכן.[4] Yet, even so, the introduction is awkward. Somewhere after בן־אדם ("son of man"), in verse 18, we expect one of Ezekiel's frequent instructions such as "Prophesy and say, Thus says the Lord," or "Set your face against....and say, Thus says the Lord," or, more simply, "And you shall say, Thus says the Lord." But first let us look at verse 18; it is not metrical. However, on rare occasions Ezekiel's oracles have been preceded by some such prose statement; 14:1 and 20:1 are cases in point. We can then accept the verse as original, though possibly it has received accretions. The passage will then become normal and regular if we may postulate that at the beginning of 19 some such expression as suggested above has fallen out. Of this there is no objective evidence, it is admitted. If anyone, then, is in the mood to haggle over it, let us go ahead, merely noting that the introductory formula is thus deficient as compared with the normal run of oracles.

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[3] See his History of Palestine and Syria, p. 535, and the original sources cited there.

[4] Except as often by A and Q, the latter with an asterisk.

The genuineness of the oracle is further attested by its certain character as prophecy. Actually Nebuchadrezzar never did conquer Egypt. The victory over Amasis won late in his reign was of minor significance. No one surveying the actual facts of history would have made the claim found in this passage and thus lay himself open to rebuttal. The latest at which it could reasonably have been written is just after the defeat of Amasis, when the meager results of the battle had not yet become apparent. But the date actually given fits the situation satisfactorily. At that time doubtless relations between Egypt and Babylon were becoming already strained; and Ezekiel improved the occasion to vent once again his hostility to Egypt; or was it rather a pro-Babylonian leaning? A moment's examination reveals that verse 20 is but a duplicate of 19; it also tells us that Egypt is to be given to Nebuchadrezzar. LXX does not support the clause אשר עשו לי ("which they did for me"). We have no recourse save to reject the entire verse. Apparently we are to delete ונשא המנה ("and he will carry away its abundance") from verse 19, also with LXX support. Then the oracle is seen to be a tristich couplet:

הנני נתן לנבוכדראצר מלך בבל את־ארץ מצרים
ושלל שללה ובזז בזה והיתה שכר לחילו

Behold, I am giving to Nebuchadrezzar,
king of Babylon,
the land of Egypt;
and he will carry off its spoil
and take its booty;[5]
and it will be wages for his army.

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[5] These two stichoi are very trite; but the conclusion of the poem seems to attest their originality. It is possible that Ezekiel here adopted a current phrase.

XXV

CHAPTER 30

Here we meet two more alleged oracles against Egypt, the one beginning in verse 1 and trailing out for an undefined distance through commentary and expansion, is undated. That in 20 ff. is dated 11/1/7, rather less than two months after that in 29:1-3, apparently while the Hophra episode was still rankling in Jewish minds.

Identification of the oracle in 1-19 is difficult. It appears to begin with eschatological scraps, having, it is true, contacts with chapters 6 and 7 but reminiscent also of descriptions of the coming day of the Lord by previous prophets. One can readily work out a pretentious "poem" from these fragments, but the result is devoid of conviction.

It will be noted that the introduction כה אמר יהוה ("thus says the Lord") occurs in verses 2, 6, 10, and 13. While the free use of this has been a mark of the commentators, and certainly this view cannot be evaded here, yet we have already seen cases of separation of material from its original introduction. It is possible, then, that part of the original is to be found following one or another of these phrases, though certainly not the one in verse 10, for 10-12 is but a tawdry repetition of trite phrases, in particular reminiscent of chapter 29. Mention of Nebuchadrezzar must not be taken as verifying its contemporaneity and genuineness; but rather, in addition to the commentators' practice of copying the text, we must recall the Jewish habit of using names of oppressors of long ago as a sort of rebus to cover their adverse comments on present tyrants. It is tempting to speculate that in this case the writer was a contemporary of Antiochus III and refers here with approval to his struggle with Egypt. The geographic dissertation in 13 ff. clearly reveals the work of the cataloguing expander. But it is an attractive view that he worked on good material.

In verse 6 also we find a scrap that carries some measure of conviction. Let it be emphasized that in following this process we are not merely making arbitrary selections in an effort to *make* a poem but are guided by known features of the text of the Book of Ezekiel. However, no finality can be claimed for any result, and, at the most, reasonable probability can be claimed for only a few fragments:

. . . .

ונפלו סמכי מצרים   וירד גאון עזה
והשבתי אילים מנף . . . .

. . . .

And the supporters of Egypt shall fall,
    and her vaunting strength shall come down;

. . . .
And I shall destroy the leaders from Memphis.....

Criteria for dating are lacking; we can but suppose that as an oracle against Egypt it was uttered in the same period as the others.

In verses 20-26 we are in a better situation. The text is conflate, and also the commentator has cited freely, so that we can employ verses 22 ff. as freely as verse 21. Indeed, it would seem that כה אמר יהוה (22) is the completion of the genuine introduction, lacking from verse 21, and that thus the oracle really begins in verse 22. In any case, verse 21*b* is a most astonishing series of duplicates; חבשה ("bound up") and רפאות ("healing") and לחבשה ("to bind it up") are clearly but variants, as are also לתת ("to give") and לשים ("to set"), and again לחזקה ("to seize it") and לתפש ("to grasp"). Then verses 23 and 26*a* are spurious intrusions influenced by 29:13. It will not be difficult to see the following as the most probable form of the oracle:

הנני אל־פרעה מלך־מצרים   ושברתי את־זרעתיו
וחזקתי זרעות מלך בבל   ונתתי את־חרבי בידו

Behold I am against Pharaoh, king of Egypt,
    and will break his arms;
and I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon,
    and will give my sword into his hand.

Allusion here to the defeat of Hophra seems pointed and clear, along with high expectations for the victorious Nebuchadrezzar. The date of the Egyptian intervention at this time is not given elsewhere.[1] But the freshness and reality of its treatment by this passage provides a clue. The invasion must have been imminent at the beginning of the eleventh year, provided we can depend on the chronological notes in these chapters. The change of mood from the oracle in 29:1-2, dated some two months earlier, is notable. There Ezekiel had been filled with contempt toward Egyptian ability, or indeed willingness, to help. But in the interval the seemingly incredible had happened; an Egyptian expeditionary force was actually on its way, and the prospects of its struggle with Nebuchadrezzar's veterans had become the uppermost topic of Jewish discussions. The whole tone of this little oracle in 30:20-25 indicates that the battle was still future. Verse 21, it is true, whether genuine introduction or intrusive, recounts the defeat in the perfect tense. But the consistency of waw with the perfect in the oracle compels us to consider this at the least a prophetic perfect. Ezekiel, then, is anticipating the outcome of the struggle and announcing in advance the Lord's overthrow of Hophra and the growing power of Nebuchadrezzar. Again we face the question of his motivation. But the oracle in chapter 29 goes far to answer the question. As a practical and keen student of his times, Ezekiel knew the futility of Egyptian intervention; he wastes no time over wishful self-deception but accepts the obvious outcome as the act of God: there was no power in Near Eastern politics to deliver from the Babylonian king; he was ordained of God.

Two further comments on the spurious materials in the chapter may be ventured: Verses 23 and 26 have the notion of the exile of Egypt which we saw was presented at greater length in 29:10 ff. And verse 5 we mentioned in our study of chapter 38 as one of the few Old Testament passages that list a mélange of foreign peoples. But the possibility of influence from the Naksh-i-Rustam inscription is even higher here than in the case of 38:4 f. The conclusion of Darius' list of subject peoples gives *puta*, *kushu*, *masu*, and *karsa*.[2] Now *masu* is the people of *maka*, some region in Arabia, and the *karsa* are the Carians. The Hebrew list has the first two in inverse order, and then "Lud, and all the ʿEreb, and Kub, and the sons of the land of the covenant"; LXX read Lub (i.e., Libya) for Kub and omitted "land" from the final phrase. Many have speculated, since the days of the Syriac translation and Aquila and Symmachus, that ʿEreb is to be pointed עֲרָב ("Arabia"); likewise, a common solution for what Cooke properly describes as "an unparalleled expression" is to emend הברית into הכרתי. This is usually taken to mean Cretans; but it is not impossible that the final taw is a dittography, and the word was originally הכרי ("Carians"). The presence of Lud and Kub (or Lub) is excessive. But, whatever one may think of this and the validity or otherwise of the emendations proposed, at least the verse is so suggestive of Darius' list as to strengthen the view tentatively advanced in our study of chapter 38 that the lists in the inscriptions of Darius are the original of these passages in the Old Testament.

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[1] See Jer. 37:5. The incident is omitted entirely from the account in Kings and Chronicles.

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[2] Weissbach, *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden*, pp. 88-89. I am indebted to my colleague, Professor George G. Cameron, in this matter.

XXVI

CHAPTER 31

This charming little chapter is a welcome relief from the nondescript stuff that has occupied us for some time. Or, rather, half of it is a beautiful lyric; the rest is thoroughly typical commentary such as is found in most chapters of this book. Again the announced theme is "Pharaoh, king of Egypt and his army." The date is given as 11/3/1, that is, lacking six days of two months after the immediately preceding treatment of the same topic in 30:20 ff.; but papyrus No. 967 and MS Q (with an asterisk) have the tenth year. It is a variant readily intelligible on the presumption of an intra-Greek corruption. But the consideration of general probability cannot be brought to bear until other matters are settled. For the attractiveness of the poem bears no relation to its clarity; it is really beset with numerous acute difficulties.

The chapter is in three sections: verses 1-9, 10-14, and 15-18. The second and third are of independent authorship. Verses 10-14 are rich in citation of the poem but seek to find a purpose in the fall of the tree while at the same time treating its symbolism with a light touch that amounts to a sort of exposition. Its closing comment about those going down to the pit is taken as his theme by the writer of verses 15-18, though he also employs the tree symbol, but more sparingly than the previous section. However, in verse 18 he returns to what seems to be a citation of the opening words of the poem.

The oracle is in verses 1-9. Verse 9 may be overlooked as characteristic expansion, but still textual problems remain acute. The immediate sequence from the genuine introductory formula to the imperative אמר ("say") is rare in the utterances of Ezekiel. Further, we have what appears to be a double commencement of the poem, in verses 2_b_ and

3*a*. The typical meter is 2:2; but it swings at times to 3:2, perhaps even 3:3, and still worse in verses 3 and 5 it is remote from even this generous laxity. Also, the commencement in second person, immediately altering to third, which is then maintained throughout the sequel, is a strange feature. And what is to be said of the dedication of the poem in verse 2 to Pharaoh, and then the announcement in verse 3 that it is about Asshur? This is certainly a corruption; but it helps little to read תאשור ("box-wood"), for the little poem has far too many trees already. And which of them was really its theme? It was scarcely the cedar of Lebanon, for this appears only in the metrically excessive verse 3 though the mythological cedar is in verse 8; also the commentaries ignore it, only the second of them referring casually to Lebanon though not to the cedar (vss. 15-16). And if a way can be found through these questions, the real issue will loom into sight. For what nation is symbolized here: who is the theme of the poem? It is too casual to answer that verse 2 removes any question by telling us that it is Egypt. The use of a tree as the symbol of the land of the Nile is just about as improbable as any figure can well be: still more if it is the cedar of Lebanon as verse 3 would have us believe. But as well papyrus No. 967 omits Pharaoh from verse 2; is this the true text? And was "king of Egypt" also intruded spuriously in a still earlier period of the text? The question is not trivial, for the commentator in verses 10-15, who provides our earliest evidence on the text, certainly did not understand the theme of the poem to be Egypt, as he would have done if this information had stared him in face in what is now verse 2. His picture of the fallen tree lying on the mountains and being forsaken in the valleys is not a sketch of Egypt at all--and we should never lose sight of the close knowledge of that land possessed by Hebrews through all the Old Testament period--but of Palestine. His interpretation suggests an analogy with the oracle in chapter 17, where the tree is Judah. But still there are great difficulties.

A convenient approach to a closer study of the poem is afforded by observing that 4*c* at best is a pale repetition of 4b but in reality obscures the point. Clearly the author is developing the unique character and privileges of this one tree; to have the deep send forth its channels to all trees destroys the emphasis. The line must be regarded as intruded. Then verse 5, while reduced to acceptable metric form by the deletion of ותרבינה סרעפתיו ("and its boughs were many") on the authority of LXX and בשׁלחו ("when it sent them out") conjecturally, still makes too much of the waters, which were adequately treated in verse 4. The length of the boughs is also overdone. At the most, we should retain probably no more than גבהה קמתו מכל עצי השדה ("it was higher than all the trees of the field"), which then is to be attached to verse 4. A similar comment relates to verse 7; the tree's beauty and majesty, the length of its boughs and the waters about its roots, are ideas already trite in the little poem; apparently the entire verse is added. Then, if corruption has not gone much further than we suppose, it is apparent that verse 6 is a unit of thought in itself, and similarly verses 2c-3 (waiving their excessive text for the moment) and verse 4 with the remnant of verse 5. More simply, a triad structure in 2:2 meter is emerging. Then we can use this criterion for criticism of verse 8, which is of excessive length in its present form. The line וערמנים לא־היו כפארתיו ("and the plane-trees were not like its branches") is short; but 8b is long. The latter has superior appeal as the concluding summary of the poem. It is possible that בגן־אלהים ("in the garden of God") has been intruded from earlier in the verse; its deletion would leave a good 2:2 line. While the balance of probability seems to favor this course, evidence is meager, and any action must be subject to serious reservations.

Uncertain as our results may have been hitherto, the problem of 2b-3a is still more difficult. The deletion of וחרש מצל ("and shady foliage") with LXX is so simple and obvious as to bring little sense of relief. A first problem is that of the second person דמית ("you were like"). Certainly all our authorities support it. And the sudden shift to third person is not an impossible strain on logic and clarity. Probably we can do no better than accept the voice of authority; but it will be difficult to escape a suspicion that nonetheless the verb was originally third person. Then what of הנה אשור ארז בלבנון ("Behold Asshur was a cedar in Lebanon") in verse 3? It cannot be pared or shaped into acceptable metrical form. Its initial הנה is suitable for the beginning of a poem and if retained we must entertain the possibility of 2b being spurious. But it is strongly attested by the chapter; to delete it is well out of the question. However, we noted above that the second commentator cited this opening verse in verse 18. He has expanded his text, duplicating בגדל ("in greatness") with בכבוד ("in dignity"). But it is notable that he follows this, not with the phrase that begins verse 3, nor any part of it, but with בעצי־עדן ("among the trees of Eden"). Then he turns aside to the idea of descent into the underworld that was introduced by the first commentator and already developed by himself in a form similar to the more famous description in chapter 32; but, in concluding, he returns to the wording of verse 2. Clearly he has in mind to end the chapter in artistic balance quoting its beginning. That phrase בעצי־עדן then attracts us. The expander in verse 9 has it also, as a parallel to גן האלהים ("garden of God"), which he has cited from verse 8. It is perhaps a natural connection of thought; but still his action would be more intelligible if we might presume that he read the words in the poem and here brings together the two mythological phrases he found there. Whatever there may be in this, at least the evidence of verse 18 indicates that the original first line of the poem was אל־מי דמית בגדל בעצי עדן ("to whom were you like in greatness, among the trees of Eden?"). How this became corrupted into our present text it is not worth while to guess, except that the presence of בלבנון ("in Lebanon") can be explained on the grounds of the glossators' tendency to insert reference to Lebanon whenever a cedar is mentioned. The clue to the question would seem to be whether ארז ("cedar") might be a corrupt reading of עדן ("Eden").

The emendation, however, will make clear what is suggested in verses 4 and 8, that the symbolism of the poem is not concerned with earthly things but with a mythological tree: neither cedar nor cypress compared with it; it was planted in the garden of God.[1] And beginning with a rhetorical question suggesting its unrivaled beauty and greatness, the account traces its supernatural nurture and resulting supremacy among all trees, such that birds, beasts, and men of all the world sheltered within its cover. The beauty of form and phrasing of the little poem is such as to recall the exquisite charm of Joyce Kilmer's "Trees." But what is its meaning?

It is to be observed that neither in the critical result presented above nor in the entire Hebrew text of these verses is there any suggestion of disaster falling upon the tree: that is reserved for the commentators. The entire theme and treatment are of the greatness of the tree such as to shadow the entire world. There are points of similarity with chapter 17 that tempt us to accept the apparent interpretation of the first commentator (vss. 10-14) that the theme is Judah. In that case, we should perhaps then understand the thought to be similar to that in chapter 15, an allusive denunciation of the excessive self-importance of the petty remnant left in Judah after the deportation of 597 B.C. But it is too bold a flight of poetic imagination, even as caricaturing such ignorant bombast, to describe little Judah as the shade and protection of all the world. The thought seems rather to deal with the great powers of Ezekiel's time; and, notwithstanding his wider outlook in the Gog oracle, this would seem to indicate either Egypt or Babylonia. We have already spoken of the ascription to Egypt; against those considerations one must weight whatever value the tradition may be believed to hold at this point. Hölscher, it is true, believes too uncritically that the poem describes appropriately the well-watered land of the Nile; but obviously this feature is equally relevant to Babylonia.[2] On the whole, it is more attractive to see here a grandiose description of the Chaldean empire. But any conclusion is beset with uncertainty. Ezekiel's cryptic method has been too much for us at this point; his meaning is quite obscure. And in this uncertainty other matters, notably the dating of the oracle, must stand in arrest.

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[1] Cf. Jeremias, Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients (1904), p. 98.

[2] Cf. Jer. 51:13. Contrary to Hölscher's opinion, Cooke suggests that the poem is not at all a threat against Egypt.

XXVII

CHAPTER 32

Here we have two more oracles that are said to be against Egypt, beginning in verses 1 and 17. Both are dated, the first 12/12/1 in most Hebrew sources, though some manuscripts read eleventh year, while LXX wavers between these, and between tenth and twelfth month; the second bears the date twelfth year, fifteenth day of the month, with LXX supplying the information that it was the first month. But again a few manuscripts claim that the year should be the eleventh.

The heavily overloaded character of both sections of the chapter is apparent. The extent of the genuine oracle is a matter of disagreement among modern commentators. Cooke and Hölscher characteristically find the second poem extending far into the account of the dead Pharaoh in the underworld (vss. 21 ff.). The familiar structure of repeated commencements with כה אמר יהוה ("thus says the Lord") provides obvious subdivisions of the first section--and these in turn appear to be composite.

The first oracle, like chapter 19, is announced as a קינה ("lament"). Like that, too, the section concludes with a conflate colophon, though this surpasses the redundancy of 19:14c. Hölscher and Cooke are certainly right in limiting the oracle to verse 2. This is apparent not alone in the new commencement in verse 3 but even more in the nature of the following material. It is made up of eschatological scraps, trite phrases, and prosy comments. Cooke strangely claims that it is "based on Ezekiel's language and thought," a startling revelation of the current ignorance of what Ezekiel's language and thought actually were. The typical commentator's citation of the oracle occurs in verse 13; verse 14 refers to the mythological idea of valleys running with oil.[1] A sort of poetic measure can be extracted from parts of the section. The threat of the coming of the king of Babylon (vs. 11) may refer to Cambyses' invasion, prospective or actual; but it is not impossible that its political relevance is to one of the yet later difficulties of Egypt with Asia. Verses 5-6 have the same inappropriate topography as we noted in chapter 31. Also they and their context appear to have left behind the imagery of a dead crocodile (or hippopotamus?); they are similar, instead, to the mythological threats in chapters 38-39. The oracle has five stichoi; there appears to be something wrong. And then the obvious course is to look for an excessive element that should be deleted. But such search fails. The sudden shift from the figure of a lion to that of a water monster is of the very essence of the oracle. Clearly Ezekiel's point is to make the charge against Egypt, "You pretended to be a fighting lion, but you are only a hippopotamus, belching out snortings and fouling your streams." But really the problem inheres not in the text but first in the massoretic punctuation and then in the setup of the passage in the Kittel Bibles. Athnaq should be transferred to בימים ("in the seas"), and these two stichoi printed as the first line. Then the rest of the verse constitutes the second line. It is a couplet of the quite common form, 3:3 and 2:2:2. The poetic snatch, by its very brevity, is a telling, forceful sneer at Egyptian futility in world politics; instead of a world power, the country was but a lazy monster sunning itself in the Nile.

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[1] I AB, col. iii, lines 6-7; Syria, XII, 212 f.

The problem of the second section is somewhat more complex. The disordered condition of the text is indicated by the wide variants of LXX. For אדרם ("I will bring them down" [?]), verse 18, it has *νεκράς* ("dead ones"); and verse 19 it omitted entirely from its place in the Hebrew text but read it as 21b, omitting then the present text of the latter. This draws attention to the fact that the Hebrew of verses 18-21 is highly conflate. LXX was right in recognizing the equivalence of these parts of 21 and 19. But also והורדהו ("and bring him down") and אדרם are duplicates; משכו ("they drew") in 20 is but a variant of the overworded השכבה or שכבו ("lie down") in 19 and 21. Then, too, את־יורדי בור ("those who go down to the pit"), verse 18, is a trite gloss. In verse 20 חרב נתנה ("a sword is given") is omitted by LXX, and וכל־המונה ("and all her multitude") is repeated from 18. Altogether we have a nice case of textual confusion. But the first line of the poem will be apparent from the facts adduced above. The final stichos of the second line is secured with no great difficulty from the conflations in 19b, 20b, and 21b, except that ירדו ("go down") is to be vocalized as a jussive (cf. 19) rather than perfect. For the first stichos one is delayed by LXX support of ממי נעמת ("whom do you surpass in beauty?"), verse 19; but it is metrically too short. Also it is suspiciously like a reader's comment. We shall probably not err in accepting בתוך חללי־חרב יפלו ("in the midst of those slain with the sword let them fall"), notwithstanding its spurious occurrence in 35:8b and throughout the rest of this chapter. This latter fact may, indeed, corroborate our decision, in that it provides commentators' support. The couplet will then be this:

נהה על־המון מצרים   והורדם אל־ארץ תחתיות
בתוך חללי־חרב יפלו   ירדו ושכבו את־ערלים

Wail for the great army of Egypt
    and conduct them down into the nether world!
Among those slain with the sword let them fall;
    let them go down and lie with the uncircumcised.

But this is not yet the end of difficulties; for what is to be done with this famous passage of Pharaoh's welcome in the lower world? Its similarity to Isaiah, chapter 14, is apparent, yet what does this imply for critical purposes? There can be no doubt that the passage is greatly expanded from whatever original it may have had. Papyrus No. 967 omits all from ἐπὶ τῆς ζωῆς in 24b to the end of 26; this may have been merely a copyist's slip through homoioteleuton, but still the nature of the passage gives good basis for the suspicion that this evidence may be weighty. Then Cooke thinks verses 29-32 are an addition. Hölscher does also and deletes much else as well. Both these find an ordered poem scattered through secondary material all the way to verse 27. But the seeming balance of the passage, lending itself then to "poetic arrangement, is but a prosy device of successive commentators. And the hard-won poems of Hölscher and Cooke are their own, not the Hebrew writers'. They have been guilty of making "poetry" out of disordered scraps rather than employing critically the resources of the chapter. The passage lacks the repeated introductions that break the sequence of most chapters in this book, but already we have seen enough examples of spurious material of this ostensibly united form that we shall not now be misled. This is all commentary, just as truly as, say, the large bulk of chapters 4 and 5. And there is little more to be said about it. It might have been written at any time between the limits of this book's composition; allusion to the princes of the north and the Sidonians (vs. 30) may bring this section well down into Macedonian times. The rest is the vague sort of historical survey that may have been put together nobody knows when.

We have left the dating of the two oracles to be discussed together, for, whatever their divergence in the Hebrew text, their problem is one. And that problem is that both the assigned dates are too late to possess acceptable meaning. Even if we follow such evidence for lower dating as exists in the case of verse 1, it is still almost eight months after the sack of Jerusalem, and by all reasonable calculation half that length of time after Ezekiel had arrived as a captive in far Babylonia. It is quite out of reasonable consideration that at this stage and condition of his career he was spending his time in wishful thinking of what might have been, and pouring out impotent contempt on the defeated Hophra, who had now had almost a year in which to forget, as best he could, his defeat. Internal evidence points to some date early in this eleventh year as the time of these oracles; that is, about the same time as that in chapter 30:20 ff. Actually that is what we would secure for the second oracle (32:17) by accepting the variant "eleventh year," and the reading of LXX that the month was the first. Indeed, the resulting date is just eight days after that of 30:20. It is a tempting course. But critics must not yield to delusive temptations! The reading "eleventh year" occurs in only two Hebrew manuscripts and the

Syriac; and Origen marked "the first month" with an obelus, according to the interesting note in the Greek manuscript Q;[2] though, indeed, that has little significance, for it but evidences a situation which still exists: the words are in the Greek but not in the Hebrew. And then what follows? Until we can get away from the "twelfth year" the month does not matter much. And in the case of verse 1 nothing but drastic conjecture will reduce the date to anything acceptable. However, if we may not play fast and loose with conjectural emendations, at least there is no ban on suspicion. And, unless the text is corrupt, then both dates are spurious. Circumstances demand a time about the end of the tenth year or the beginning of the eleventh.

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[2] Swete, The Old Testament in Greek, ad. loc.

XXVIII

CHAPTER 26

With this we begin the famous series of oracles against Tyre. And we shall find ourselves in the interesting position of reversing the emphasis with which we began our study of Ezekiel; for here the poetry is overdone by recent commentators, though they balance this by sometimes overlooking such original poetry as does exist.

The divisions of the chapter are obvious: (*a*) verses 1-6, (*b*) 7-14, (*c*) 15-18, and (*d*) 19-21. The independence of these is evident, *inter alia*, by repetitions; thus verse 14 is little but a resumption of verses 4-5; 8*a* is echoed in 11*b*, verse 9 in 12*b*; 10*a* and 11*a* are similar.[1] But, as well, many allusions to and connections with passages elsewhere in the book are apparent; verse 15 is very similar to 31:16; verse 20 is also, but still more it reminds us of Pharaoh's descent into the underworld in 32:20 ff.; verse 8*b* is like 4:2. However, we must come to grips with the real problem of the chapter.

The introduction is normal, except that, like 32:17, it omits the month, which, as there, LXX undertakes to inform us was the first.[2] But immediately following the familiar בן־אדם ("son of man") we encounter יען——לכן ("because ....therefore") material of the identical sort that made up much of chapter 25. Verse 2 is certainly spurious; verse 3 likewise, notwithstanding its attractive beginning הנני עליך ("Behold I am against you"). This latter verse, alone with 4-6 is too lightly accepted as poetry. Why should it be so any more than the parallel, and certainly prose passages, 25:7, 9, 13 and 16. A safer view is that they are balanced and somewhat elevated prose, nothing more. Verse 6 is foreign to even this spurious environment, as is apparent from its being appended following the formal completion of the passage in verse 5.

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[1] Cf. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* (1936), p. 287.

[2] But in this case only MS A.

It is convenient to pass over section b, going on first to c and d. The former of these, verses 15-18, is seen to consist of a prose introduction to a brief dirge on the fall of Tyre, the text of which is apparently considerably expanded. The introduction is patently foreign to the dirge. Like 32:22 ff., it is full of the idea of the descent of the tyrant into the underworld. The important point for our purpose, however, is that its effort to throw the time of the dirge into the future is a transparent deception. The poem is not concerned with what some uncertain persons may say about the fall of Tyre when it shall occur but is a poet's celebration of the accomplished fact! This is certain whether we read the Hebrew text or prefer the recension of LXX. The destruction of Tyre has already taken place. And the point of reference then is obvious: this is a celebration of Alexander's capture of Tyre in 332 B.C.[3]

Section d (vss. 19-21) calls for still less consideration. Even Cooke's generous mood can see only one line of poetry in it. But, poetry or prose, it is spurious beyond a question. It has not a single mark of genuine authorship. Cooke, having conducted Pharaoh to She'ol in chapter 32, must here in consistency find more of Ezekiel's writings. But this is merely a piece of his inability to see the line between genuine and spurious.

And so we return to verses 7-14. But the description of the assault of Tyre is too eloquent. The thud of the battering rams, the dust of the cavalry with the horses trampling the streets in mud--why this is not Nebuchadrezzar at all! It is difficult to believe that Ezekiel was so devoid of a knowledge of local geography as to give such a picture, even as prediction. In any case, it could have relevance for his day only as concerning the suburb of Tyre on the mainland; but surely he would not distort the point by picturing a triumphant advance--through an unimportant country depot! In so far as these verses have any basis in reality they must, like 17-18, be brought down to Alexander's time. It is not at all certain, however, that they have any relevance to Tyre. That they are attached to verse 7 means nothing; they look very like standard, stock material of Old Testament commentators: trite phrases that can be strung together in any convenient context to describe the fall of a city. However that may be, the crux of the passage is verse 7. Mention of Nebuchadrezzar is not conclusive of contemporaneity, for we have already commented on late oracles possessing this device. More to the point, though, is the fact that, contrary to uniform opinion--even Cooke is no exception--the verses contain a poetic oracle completely typical of Ezekiel's work. But first a critical point; what are we to say of the rare phrase מלך מלכים ("king of kings")? LXX renders *βασιλεὺς βασιλέων ἐστιν*; which seems to evidence an original מלך מלכים הוא. And that we can at once recognize to be a gloss. Then, with the half-apology that Nebuchadrezzar's name is not especially poetic, we find the original couplet reads straight ahead in our text:

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[3] Cf. Torrey, Pseudo-Ezekiel, p. 94.

הנני מביא אל־צר   נבוכדראצר מלך־בבל מצפון
בסוס וברכב ובפרשים   וקהל ועם־רב

Behold, I am bringing against Tyre
    Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, from the north,
with horse and chariot and cavalry
    and with a great assembled host.

As remarked, this is highly characteristic of Ezekiel. The one difficulty in accepting it at once is its position in the chapter. But apparently, just as in chapters 25 and 33, the genuine introduction has become separated from the oracle, and כה אמר יהוה ("thus says the Lord") of verse 7 is either the completion of the genuine formula thus displaced[4] or more probably an editor's effort to give proper introduction to the oracle which he correctly saw did not belong with verses 2-6 and so could not rightly be attached directly to them.

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[4] It is apparent that vs. 3 is a gloss on vs. 7, though preceding the latter, as happens not infrequently in the Book of Ezekiel.

XXIX

CHAPTER 27

This is deservedly the best known of the three chapters on Tyre. Its apparent poetic structure is interrupted by a long prose catalogue of the trade of the city (vss. 11-24) which is commonly recognized to be spurious, but, with this removed, the balance of the chapter is ostensibly a continuous poem. A disturbing feature, however, is that it then contains a poem within a poem, for foreign sailors are represented as chanting a dirge over the wreck of Tyre (vss. 32-36). This appears the more suspicious when it is observed that the chapter as a whole is announced as such a dirge.

The chapter presents Tyre as a magnificent ship, an appropriate figure which then is worked out, whether or not by a single author, with considerable logical consistency and effectiveness. Verses 3b (where the "poem" begins) to 7 recount the superb and costly construction of the ship; verses 8-10, its manning; verses 11-24, the prose section already mentioned, come in fittingly at this point with the commerce of the ship; verses 25-27 recount the shipwreck; verses 28-31, the consternation of foreign sailors; and verses 32-36, their lamentation. On a superficial view, too, the poetry is of a high order. It would seem that the exponents of a great unified literary work here by the prophet Ezekiel are in a strong position. But "all that glitters is not gold."

The "poem" certainly starts with a personification of the city, not with the symbol of a ship. Who would suspect a ship in verse 3? And certainly verse 4 is relevant to the city: its borders are in the sea; it had "builders" (בניך), a word that is never used in the Old Testament of ship construction, where instead ships are "made"[1] (עשה)

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[1] So the ark, Gen. 6:14-16; see, too, I Kings 9:26 and

But then suddenly and without explanation in verse 5 we are plunged immediately into the symbol of the ship. Why so? What leap of thought has the writer made, demanding that we follow his mental acrobatics? But then, scarce less incomprehensible, the personification of the city is forgotten completely and the ship symbol is maintained to the end. Are we, then, to take the easy course of charging that verse 4 is an intrusion and in reality the figure from the first was that of a ship? Otherwise, how shall we explain its sudden introduction? But, indeed, is this account of the structure and manning of the ship poetry? Critics, as we have noted, freely relegate the merchandise (vss. 11-24) to the status of prose; is there any better case for the other? One notes how imperfect the lines are; no more is needed than a glance at the devices of the editors of the Kittel Bible to see that the structure is very irregular. Besides, poetry is something different from a mere catalogue of materials and parts of a ship such as this. It is not poetry at all but repetitious prose, which by the recurrence of similar phrases gives the impression of parallelism. However, it will be seen that this condemnation does not apply to the entire chapter, for from verse 25 onward there is a section of real poetry.

But now, turning to the conclusion of the chapter, we observe again features that disturb the common complacency with which it is accepted. Verse 32 plunges us into prose once more. Still worse, it is patently a colophon of the sort which we have met twice already in our study of this book.[2] Just as there it balances the initial announcement that the passage is a lamentation (קינה). Then this is really the conclusion of the chapter, or rather it was at one time, but afterward someone wrote in verses 32*b*-36 as a sort of appendage. And now our eyes open to a feature that we have overlooked. These verses are made up of allusions to and comments on verses 26-31. The commentator has

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II Chron. 20:36, the only passages in the Old Testament where ship construction is related.

[2] In 19:14 and 32:16.

cleverly hidden its identity behind a new sort of introduction; but, thanks to the colophon which he did not delete, we have detected him nonetheless! But we shall not resent his innocent deception now that in this roundabout way he has confessed guilt; for as commonly his allusions provide valuable evidence to the text of his day.

So then, the original--doubtless a genuine oracle --is contained within the limits, verses 3b-31. Rather generous limits for Ezekiel, we must say, but the bulk immediately shrinks. We shall haggle no longer over the admittedly prose section 11-24; it is very valuable source material for the economic history of some late period of ancient times, but our concern now is to find what the prophet Ezekiel did and said. But with this goes also the description of the ship's structure and manning. This is typical expanders' material; somewhere they found a suggestion of a magnificent ship and set themselves to embellish it. One may note as modest support of this view that the presence of "Paras and Lud and Put" in Tyre's army as men of war, hanging up helmet and shield, is not consistent with the general picture of a merchant vessel, even though we make large allowance for the thin line in ancient shipping between legitimate trade and piracy. The issue is softened by the device favored by some critics of including this verse (and Kraetschmar says vs. 9b also) with the following "prose" section; but this in turn plays into our hands when we charge that none of this actually is poetry: critics are uncertain where to draw the line between their "poetry" and unadulterated prose. But, further, if the ship was manned by expert seamen such as those of Sidon and Arvad, perhaps also those of Simirra and Gebal, the sudden advance to the shipwreck (vss. 26-27) is unintelligible. These men were fully qualified to navigate the high seas (מים רבים) and brave the threat of the east wind.

But since the theme of the original poem was clearly the wreck of the great ship, then verse 4 must be regarded as intruded. And so, by these eliminations, the sequence of the original material goes from verse 3b to 25. Still, we are confronted with the fact that there is no ship in 3*b*, though in 25 it is loaded with its pricelesss cargo and under full sail far out to sea. Ezekiel left rather much to the imagination of his readers! But if for אני ("I") in verse 3, we read אני ("ship") all becomes clear; we have the ship from the beginning. Then apparently אמרת ("you said") was inserted because the verse seemed unintelligible with this wrong vocalization of the key word. Strictly, this yields not a single ship but more appropriately the whole merchant marine of Tyre: her entire shipping was a majestic fact of the ancient world, but Ezekiel here pictures the loss of all.

When it is recognized that the oracle is certainly concerned with the prospective wreck of the ship Tyre, in other words, that it is a prophecy, and when we realize that the prophetic perfect is practically nonexistent in the genuine utterances of Ezekiel,[3] it becomes apparent that verse 26*b* is suspect. An added consideration is that, as we shall see in a moment, it will not come within the strophic structure. On the convergence of these two lines of evidence we may ignore it. The same reasoning does not apply to 26*a*, which rather is a real past tense: the ship *has been* brought into stormy waters, hence the wreck is about to occur. Verse 27 is heavily glossed. Verse 33 attests its first stichos; 34*b* supports the verb נפל ("fall"), though departing from the certainly imperfect tense of verse 27. Verse 34*a* gives a variant to בלב ימים ("in the heart of the seas"); it is to be welcomed as avoiding repetition, which would not be in Ezekiel's best style. Then the list of workers in 27 is seen to be an allusion to verses 8-10.

Now a good pair of couplets can be found by taking 28 with 29*a* and 30 with 31*b*. But our sense of Ezekiel's characteristics, which by this time should be somewhat dependable, leads us to doubt their originality. It is much more probable that the genuine oracle concluded, not with histrionic lamentations of foreign sailors, but simply with the loss of the ships and their cargoes. The oracle would then be no more than this pair of couplets:

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[3] Actually the only passage that is relevant at all, apart from 30:21 (on which see above pp.194), is 7:2 (and its textual duplication). But even this is not a true prophetic perfect, for its meaning is that in these few last days of Jerusalem the period of the end had already arrived.

צר את אני   כלילת יפי
ותמלאי ותכבדי מאד   בלב ימים

במים רבים הבאוך   השטים אותך
הונך ועזבוניך מעברך   יפלו במעמקי־מים

Tyre, you are a ship
    of surpassing beauty;
and you are loaded full, and most majestic
    standing far out to sea.

Into high seas they brought you:
    those pilots of yours--
your wealth, your treasure and trade
    shall go down in the watery deep.

There is little more to be said. No date is assigned; the oracle was probably uttered about the time of that in chapter 26, when the commencement of the siege drew Ezekiel's attention to Tyre. But again there is no conclusive reason why it may not be dated anywhere within the long years of Nebuchadrezzar's fruitless operations. Equally, the date of the spurious material is not indicated, except that the grouping of Persia, Lud, and Put (vs. 10) suggests, as in the parallels in chapters 30 and 38, an Achaemenid date for one of the commentators.

XXX

CHAPTER 28

This chapter purports to contain three oracles, beginning in verses 1, 11, and 20; the first two are against Tyre, the third against Sidon. The first is generally considered poetry, the second entirely prose, and the third mixed of both. However that may be, this third section presents the familiar structure of commentator's additions with the formula כה אמר יהוה ("thus says the Lord").

The first section confronts us with the strange feature of an imperative אמר ("say") following immediately the introductory ויהי דבר יהוה אלי לאמר בן־אדם ("and the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of Man"). This imperative is somewhat frequent in responses; but only once before, in 31:2, have we encountered it in the original oracle of a section. But still worse is the fact that following the announcement of this utterance to the *nagid* of Tyre we plunge without delay into a long יען ("because") passage; the conjunction is taken up abortively by לכן ("therefore") in verse 6 but then repeated, so that apparently the real sequence is in verses 7 ff. And certainly verses 9-10 are not genuine. The case for an oracle from Ezekiel looks dubious, notwithstanding the assurance given by the orthodox formula. However, we recall that these יען——לכן passages have sometimes intruded themselves into the intimate connection of introduction and oracle. And closer examination reveals that the couplet 3-4*a* has the marks of Ezekiel's thought; its concise brevity has given the suggestion for the somewhat accurate interpretation in verse 2 and has also stimulated the expansions and repetitions in 4*b*-5. We may consider this couplet the original nucleus of the passage. As in chapter 27, the date is vague. Ezekiel's thought is clear; he criticizes the worldly wisdom of the Tyrian leader by which he has amassed such wealth for his city; apparently he considers this to be arrogance toward God amounting to blasphemy, as the commentator properly points out. And this mood may have been induced by the circumstances of Nebuchadrezzar's presence in the West, with its dire results for Judah and its active aggression against Tyre. The high quality of the commentary is in happy contrast to much that we have noted hitherto, where Ezekiel's meaning has been totally misunderstood and distorted. However, it is revealing to compare the description of the threatened destroyer of Tyre in verse 7 with that in 26:7, which we saw reason to accept as genuine. In that passage, Nebuchadrezzar is named; the prophecy is specific and consonant with history. But here we have vaguely "strangers, gentile tyrants," a description that either evinces mere loose thinking on the part of the author or at best alludes to the Macedonian conquest and the subsequent struggle of the Ptolemies and Seleucids for Syria.

In the second section, verses 10-19, we find ourselves once more on familiar ground. For though we miss the recurrent כה אמר יהוה introductions, still the passage is otherwise characteristic of most chapters of this book. After a typical introduction, in this case again culminating in directions to take up a kinah[1] against the king of Tyre, the passage moves on into apparently metrical structure, though soon meeting grave difficulties; but then in verse 13 the cataloguing expander has found a rich field to exploit, for he has listed nine of the precious stones of the high priest's breastplate, a suggestion which obviously impelled the Greek translator to add the remaining three. We note repetitions, too, whether citations or duplicates אבני אש ("stones of fire") in 14 and 16; also עדן גן־אלהים ("Eden, the garden of God"), verse 13, in some way is taken up again in הר קדש אלהים ("the holy mountain of God" [vs. 14; cf. vs. 16]). And at verse 16 there begins a moralizing application typical of many spurious comments that we have studied. And not to be overlooked is our familiar friend of many a hard-contested passage, שממו ("are desolate"), verse 19, standing however in strange loneliness without the support of "knowing that I am the Lord"! Enough is apparent to assure us in anticipation that here is a genuine oracle worked over in much the usual fashion. But to disentangle it from its attachments is more than usually difficult.

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[1] The instructions, in almost identical form, occur also in 27:2, 32:2, and spuriously in 19:1. A comparable expression is found in 26:17; and the word kinah occurs elsewhere in the book in 19:14, 27:32, 32:16, and the abnormal plural kinim in 2:10.

But when it is noted that the evidence of LXX is against מלא חכמה ("full of wisdom") of verse 12, the first line of the poem is clear, save that חותם must be vocalized חתם ("seal"),[2] on which more below. Then it seems best to accept as the second line the immediate sequel in verse 13 as far as מסכתך ("your covering"), though this departs from the 3:2 measure with which we began; but to seek to retain it will throw us into a too free treatment of the text. The balance of verse 13 is certainly spurious, as intimated above; the only part of it meriting consideration is ביום הבראך כוננו ("in the day you were created there were prepared"); but, since considerations of structure make the case competitive, this must be dismissed as inferior. At the beginning of verse 4, את ("you") is in some way wrong, but the course taken by LXX of understanding it as the preposition does not commend itself. Rather we must point it as the masculine pronoun to agree with verse 12. Then הסוכך ("that overshadows") is apparently an explanatory gloss on the unusual ממשח ("overshadowing"?); both words are missing from LXX, but it is difficult to see how this can be right. Then the words ונתתיך בהר קדש אלהים היתה ("and I set you in the holy mountain of God; you were....") are best regarded as a spurious repetition from verse 13. Our former LXX sources seem to have been unanimous in reading ἐγενήθης for התהלכת ("you walked"), which would be disturbing. But, fortunately, No. 967 has ἐπορεύθης. Apparently the current reading represents some sort of intra-Greek corruption. But verse 15 is suspiciously like commentary, with its repetition of the perfect beauty of the symbolized Tyre, and its citation of

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[2] Cf. *The Bible: An American Translation* (1935), *ad. loc.*; and so some manuscripts.

ביום הבראך from verse 13. And verse 16 is certainly such, for it has left the symbol and arraigns the personified city for the wickedness of its rich commerce. However, 17*a* is apropos of the figure and provides a metrical line. But the rest is commentary so obvious that one need not argue it. Then with some remaining uncertainties, particularly in the third line, the oracle will emerge thus:

אתה חתם תכנית   וכלילת יפי
בעדן גן־אלהים היית   כל־אבן יקרה מסכתך

אתה כרוב ממשח   בתוך אבני־אש התהלכת
גבה לבך ביפיך   שחת חכמתך על־יפעתך

Strange to say, the passage has been completely misunderstood. Cooke is certain of corruption, which he undertakes to emend; Bertholet is completely baffled. Even Gordon misses the point, after his happy beginning;[3] and Matthews, who accepts his translation, immediately turns away in the direction of "the bride of Tanit." But really the description is quite clear, if one will take the words as they are and then exert just a little imagination. The first line tells us unmistakably that the symbol is of a beautifully cut seal; the second describes its basic design, the mythical garden with precious stones, lines 3 and 4 then, forming the second couplet which is appropriately introduced like the first with אתה ("you"), present the central motif of the seal's engraving and the relation of all this to its antitype, the city of Tyre. There is thus a slight inconsistency--rather, we should say, a case of poetic license—in that Tyre is both the seal and its design. That design is of a cherub with wide-spreading wings in "Eden, the garden of God," walking among stones of fire. It is a design not unfamiliar among the inscribed seals preserved from the ancient East.[4] One may indulge some pardonable thrill in thus looking today on the sort of ancient gem that Ezekiel knew and here employed for his prophetic symbolism. But there remains yet part of the passage where commentators and translators have succeeded in mystifying themselves. What was the function of the precious stones? The word מסכתך (vs. 13) is uniformly assumed to come from the root סכך ("to cover").[5] It is freely recognized that in such case kaph should have daghesh, but on the contrary the massoretic tradition is strong for raphe. Still modern interpreters persist, probably, like Cooke, believing that "the context requires" a derivation from סכך--one more case of using scholarly ignorance as a criterion of interpretation! Surely those ancient workers meant something intelligible when they insisted that kaph should be raphe. Really "covering" is exactly what "the context requires" that we shall not have! What is the appropriateness of a "covering" for an inscribed gem? But just as the Massoretes emphasized, the root must be סוך. This has two meanings: to anoint and to hedge. It is the latter we want. The seal was "hedged about" with a row of precious stones: in more idiomatic English, it was inclosed in a setting of gems. Now, it is true, none of this sort is known from the ancient East, though a few inclosed in gold have survived. But, again, our ignorance must not dictate our exegesis. This is what Ezekiel says with unmistakable clarity.

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[3] *The Bible: An American Translation* (1935), *ad.loc.*

[4] For such a griffin see W. E. Staples, *An Inscribed Scaraboid* ("Oriental Institute Communications," No. 9), pp. 49 ff. For cherubs see Delaporte, *Catalogue des Cylindres orientaux (1920-23)*, Pls. LVII, 3, 8; LXXXV, 12. Cf. winged griffings, sphinxes, and lions in von der Osten, *Ancient Oriental Seals in the Collection of Mr. Edward T. Newell* ("O.I.P.," Vol. XXII [Chicago, 1934]), Pls. XXI, 292; XXIX, 433; XXX, 451; XXXI, 457; XXXII, 551; XXXVIII, 667.

But the word תכנית ("measure"?) likewise has occasioned perplexity for some commentators. Yet the context indicates the required meaning and shows that the usual derivation from the root תכן ("regulate, measure") must be correct: the seal was one of correct measure, that is, of shapely form. The oracle then lends itself to translation thus:

> You are a seal of shapely design,
>   of exquisite beauty:
> you are in Eden, the garden of God,
>   enclosed in a setting of all precious gems.

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[5] Gordon renders "shield."

> You are a cherub with wide-spreading wings;
>   among stones of fire you walk.
> Your heart has grown proud in pomp,
>   your wisdom you have ruined for splendor.

So the symbol is of an exceptionally valuable seal. And its design is likewise unusual, nothing less than the depicted mythology of Tyre, for in the cherub walking among stones of fire we are to recognize a clear reference to the phoenix. And the mention of the garden of God, glossed with reference to the divine mountain, is part of the same. So Ezekiel has with unusual appropriateness chosen the actual symbolism of the religion and mythology of Tyre as the theme of his oracle. And he merely comments that such divine ascriptions have unbalanced the city's traditional wisdom through pride. The result of this, or the divine punishment called down by it, he does not relate. The same light allusive touch that we traced at the beginning of our study characterizes his work as now we draw toward its conclusion. Ezekiel merely described the situation and left it to his hearers to understand that some dire result would follow. What fate he had in mind is not clear to us, for, just as in the case of his other anti-Tyrian oracles, we do not know when he uttered this. For lack of other information, it is convenient to relate it to the beginning of Nebuchadrezzar's siege of Tyre.

The third section of the chapter will occupy less time. It is an oracle against Sidon. Introductory formula and beginning of the oracle are all in order. But the oracle itself is so slight that we cannot avoid some suspicions. Certainly verse 22b is spurious. Verse 23a is reminiscent of the three plagues of chapter 5, of which the commentators are so fond; and 23b is but a compilation of trite phrases. It may be that the oracle was originally of only one line; but even so it is of such meager content as to prompt a question whether all is artificial. But there is, we may suppose, no reason why Ezekiel should not have spoken against Sidon as well as Tyre; and there is the clear tradition in verses 20-22 that he did so. With that we must dismiss the matter.

The commentary in verses 24 ff. is notable, mostly for its obvious date in the Diaspora. As well, the phrasing is like that of 38:8 and related passages in the "Gog" chapters. But these verses have a mournful overtone, too, with their mood of Jewish suppressed resentment for the irritations and contumely borne through the long years of the ancient scattering, just as later through their wanderings in Europe where Jewish hardships and wrongs are a bitter commentary on their "Christian" environment. And in the ancient world as in the medieval, the Jew apparently found spiritual redress and some measure of peace as he withdrew into his sacred writings, conning them over for hope of that day when Israel should dwell in safety and build houses and plant vineyards, beholding the judgments of God on those who had scoffed at their plight.

XXXI

CHAPTERS 1-3

There is no novelty in grouping these chapters together for somewhat unified treatment; it has become the common practice of recent commentators. And, indeed, their unity is obvious. The story begun in chapter 1, verse 1, comes to completion only at the end of chapter 3, though 3:16-19 is a separate section, quite distinct from its context but loosely connected by the editorial note, "And it happened after seven days." However, chapter 1 is a distinct section of this unity, demanding treatment in its own right as opening the entire problem.

Beginning with Herrmann and Hölscher, it has now become the accepted vogue to see in chapter 1 a telescoping of two separate accounts, a situation somewhat similar to that postulated by the common view of chapter 4. It is believed that the opening verses record a revelation to the prophet through a storm; but the bulk of the chapter, dealing with the throne chariot of the Lord, is of distinct origin attached here by some secondary hand. As we have learned to expect, there is no agreement as to the precise limits of these two accounts; but roughly, we may say, the vision of the throne chariot is held to extend from about verse 5 to verse 26 or 28. Bertholet, indeed, has "die Thronwagenvision" extend from 1:4 to 2:2; Matthews finds a vision of a storm at sunset in 1:4-5, 22, 26-28; and Herntrich follows the jigsaw method, carving the three chapters into sections that appeal to him and then piecing them together in a new order. Matthews alone detects the presence of poetry; his selection of an original nucleus he arranges in three strophes of 4, 6, and 5 lines, respectively. Mere arithmetic makes us suspicious; but the conclusive test lies in an examination of the Hebrew--which is totally impossible as poetry. All alike, however, accept the presence of a genuine original, though again the views differ widely, from Herrmann, Bertholet, and Cooke, who accept practically everything, to Hölscher and Herntrich, for whom Ezekiel's material is a mere framework greatly expanded by the "throne-chariot" material. None may deny the values in this diverse speculation; we shall have occasion in a moment to commend some of the observations; but the situation as a whole is eloquent testimony to the chaos of current criticism of the Book of Ezekiel. It reveals also the basis of this confusion, in that no critic has evolved a sound criterion for identifying genuine material; hence all alike are but guessing. Little wonder, then, that their views are various; in the realm of imagination there are no guides or inhibitions! But further we discover here the underlying cause of this uncertainty and at the same time the reason for the strange fact already remarked that this book waited so long to be subjected to modern criticism. All critics have hitherto begun at chapter 1. Rather natural, it may seem! But, nonetheless, it is precisely what they should not have done, for chapter 1 in itself provides no criteria whatever for identification of original material. Its text is bad, none can deny; and it confronts one at the outset with the unsolved problem of its two dates; its imagery also is unique. But the story hangs well together, and the chapter manifests no clear breaks such as to provide bases for analyses. Only by an aroused critical sense do we detect that perhaps verse 4 indicates a new beginning and thus set the "throne chariot" off as of secondary origin. But evidence is meager, and critical criteria rare and inconclusive.

The importance of the course followed in this study now asserts itself. For with almost the entirety of the first thirty-nine chapters of the book analyzed, and definite features of Ezekiel's style, methods, and thought familiar now almost to the point of tedium, we are for the first time qualified to hold a reasoned opinion about these opening chapters. And the situation that strikes us, almost with astonishment, is their complete strangeness; here we have arrived in another world of literary activity. We cast about for some familiar feature, but can find nothing except the date, highly questionable as this is! The generous results of Herrmann and the others fill us with amazement, for even the meager residua of Hölscher, Herntrich, and Matthews strike no responsive chord among our established criteria. Are we, then, to hold that the entire narrative is spurious?

It is, we must concede, entirely possible that Ezekiel wrote certain compositions quite different from the almost tediously uniform style of the great bulk of his oracles, as we have uncovered them. Certainly the other prophets were more diversified, and their books provide a variety of genuine prose as well as poetry such as we have not met in Ezekiel's. Still more it must be granted that the uniqueness of the theme of chapters 1-3, presenting a highly personal account of the prophet's own experience, apparently at the beginning of his ministry, might well stand apart in literary style. If Ezekiel had chosen to record this experience in dignified prose, reserving his brief poetic ventures for utterances to or about the people, it could have been a normal and ordinary feature of literary activity. Nonetheless, before we incline to this position, we should first recognize that it leaves us with no criteria whatever for appraisal and analysis of these chapters. And, in that case, the fair thing to do would be to accept them practically entire, conceding only such minor deletions as fall within the limits of text criticism. The divergence of narrative at verse 5 is not sufficient to bear such radical results as Hölscher and the others would claim--that is, let it be emphasized, if we are deprived of criteria by acceptance of even his relatively modest nucleus.

But before throwing up the problem in this fashion, it is incumbent on us to make a careful examination lest possibly there are here actually some marks of our familiar Ezekiel obscured and overlaid in, perhaps, a familiar way; for we have seen on several occasions how our clue has lost itself in a mass of spurious comments, only to emerge again, however, through careful study.

The dating, we noted, is the one familiar feature in chapter 1. Dubious as it may be, that is then the point at which we must make a start. Waiving the problem of the inscrutable "thirtieth year," it is seen that verse 1 begins in a style now well known. With the single exception of 29:1, dated passages throughout the book start with ויהי ("and it was"); and the narration is uniformly in first person. The date is then regularly followed by a verb in the perfect, except in 8:1--of which more later; and, save for 20:1 and 33:21, where the account naturally employs בוא ("come"), this verb is always היה ("was"). Now a striking fact is that precisely this sequence is secured in chapter 1 by going direct from the date in verse 1*a* to verse 3 (recognizing the infinitive absolute היה as merely a conflate repetition of the following finite verb). Even more remarkable is it that at this point our long familiar introductory formula follows right along; indeed, if we may attach the yodh of יחזקאל ("Ezekiel") to the preceding preposition, we have it complete to the point where it should proceed, "....saying, son of man, Say to....." It is not at all suggested that this represents a process by which the text actually became corrupted; rather, if we are on the right line, the original first-person narrative was deliberately altered to third in order to introduce the name and ancestry of Ezekiel appropriately, as it seemed, at the beginning of his book. It is gratifying, then, though far from conclusive, to find certain scholars agreeing that the original reading here was, ".... came unto me."[1] In the present form of our text, this account follows well on verse 2; but the normal sequence of the dated formula leading direct as it does from verse 1*a* into verse 3 puts it out of consideration that verse 2 is original. Rather, we must agree with those scholars who consider it a gloss.

However, the clue we have discovered is sufficiently arresting to demand that we pursue its possibilities. Where, then, do we find the sequence, לאמר בן־אדם ("saying, Son of Man")? The beginning of chapter 2 is of interest; though it has ויאמר אלי ("and he said to me") instead of לאמר ("saying"), this may be merely editorial alteration to fit the sequence from 1:28. But precisely that is the difficulty; for 2:1 is the narrative sequence of the vision in chapter 1 and could be employed for our purpose only by a drastic course of conjectural emendation. But the phrase is repeated in 2:3. And now it has the double attractiveness that it is followed immediately by a metrical line quite in the style of Ezekiel. The expression בני ישראל ("sons of Israel") troubles us; but fortunately LXX evidences an original בית ישראל ("House of Israel"), which, it will be recalled, is Ezekiel's usual term for his own people. Bertholet, it is pleasant to admit, has already pointed out this connection; he states that 2:3 "liese sich wohl als unmittelbare Fortsetzung an 1:3 abschliessen." But then he misses the point, for, following Kraetschmar, he notes the repetitions in 2:3-7 and concludes that 3:4-9, which these parallel, is the original passage. Hölscher, too, had made the important observation that three times Ezekiel is commanded to go and speak: in 2:1-5 to the rebellious sons of Israel; in 3:4-9 to the House of Israel; and in 3:10-11 to the *golah*. Like Bertholet, he decides in favor of the originality of the account in 3:4-9. But this is incidental. The observations are sound; the opinions are negligible. For the meaning of these facts is that here we meet again our familiar phenomenon, a conflate text. Indeed, the conflation is more far-reaching than the simple triplication claimed by these exegetes would indicate.

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[1] See Bewer in *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, I (1934), 100; also Bertholet and Cooke, *ad. loc*.

Much of this conflation, particularly from 2:3 to 3:9, hangs about the idea of the rebelliousness of the people. Then the actual commission of Ezekiel is presented, most strikingly in 2:9-3:3, but also in 2:4*b* and its parallels that relate to speaking the Lord's words to the people. Both 2:6 and 3:9 are concerned with the prophet's courage. But also the phrase about hearing or ceasing occurs three times: in 2:5,7 and 3:11; and as well it has several reminiscences in the form of comments on a readiness to hear; e.g., 2:8, 3:6*b*, and 3:7. Much of this, such as the development of the stubborn nature of the people, we recognize at once to be typical of the commentators' thinking. The challenge to Ezekiel's courage is evidently also a commentary on his commission and the badness of the people. But the three-times-quoted phrase, "whether they will hear and will stop," commends itself; it is probably good. However, since the clue that we are following started us in 2:3 with a metrical line in Ezekiel's long-familiar style, we are not dependent alone upon our feeling for his ideas, which now should be sharpened to some accuracy, but can also apply the criterion of form. It will be seen that all falls naturally into intelligible relationship of typical commentators' expansions if we recognize as the original the following:

בן־אדם
שׁלח אני אותך   אל־בית ישראל
ואמרת אליהם כה אמר יהוה
אם ישמעו   ואם יחדלו

Son of man,
I am sending you
to the House of Israel;
and you shall say to them, Thus says the Lord:
If only they would hear,
if only they would stop![2]

The line, "And you shall say to them, Thus says the Lord," is prose; that is, the oracle contains two separate lines of poetry with their different prose introductions.

We have already seen in our study of chapter 33 that 3:16-19 also contains a typical, genuine oracle. But beyond these two short passages and the obvious repetitions of the first one, there is not a single verse in the entirety of the three chapters that commends itself as Ezekiel's work. One is attracted by 3:25, hoping that it may lead into another acceptable passage; but it proves a false hope. It runs off into crass prose; and its similarity to 4:1 is superficial. So our result stands. The genuine material in chapters 1-3 is not more than 1:1*a*$^{\alpha}$,3*a*; 2:3*a*$^{\alpha}$, 4*b*, 5*a* (in part), the latter duplicated in 3:11*a*β, *b*.

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[2] The third person of these verbs seems odd, but it is fully attested in our textual sources. We have no recourse but to accept it. Apparently we are to understand the utterance as an apostrophe.

The simplicity of this result--its radicalism, perhaps some will think--demands, however, that we consider seriously our methods and result. Yet we need delay but little. For the long leap from 1:3 to 2:3, already in the main required by previous critics, while more extensive, is yet similar to the intrusions of spurious material between the introductory formula and the oracle which we have found in several chapters. Further, the analysis of 2:3-3:11 has already been anticipated in our wrestle with equally complex conflations where our results cannot be far from the original. And, finally, the passage thus isolated is so characteristic of Ezekiel that, summing all up, it commends itself cogently as the solution of this contentious problem. Happily, then, we find that we are not, as it seemed at first, in a *terra incognita*, compelled to grope blindly without guide or compass merely guessing our way, but we have found well-known terrain. Here is the identical Ezekiel with whom we have traversed many a chapter; we greet him with a sense of relief almost as an old friend. Like folk lost in the woods, suddenly meeting an acquaintance, we are drawn to him with a surge of human warmth.

The oracle is in its proper place at the beginning of the book; for it is patently Ezekiel's account of his call to the office of prophet. And, like Isaiah, he was conscious in that initial experience of the difficulty of his task because of the obduracy of his people: would they hear and cease their evil-doing?

As the account of his "call," the date of the incident is somewhat roughly indicated, for we have found that Ezekiel was already at work early in the reign of Zedekiah; indeed, we encountered some evidence, however slight, that he may have begun actually in the later years of Jekoiakim. Then the commonly accepted date, 592 B.C., based though it is on the clear statement of 1:2, is quite impossible; he was an experienced prophet with years of teaching back of him by the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, which obviously is the same as the fifth year of Zedekiah. The glossator is wrong, and his purpose is apparent. Even apart from the statements in 1b and 3b, whether or not by the one interpolator, as Herntrich believes, it is apparent that the purport of verse 2 is to link Ezekiel's work with the exiled Jews in Babylonia. Here, once more, the alleged "Babylonian editor" proves to be a reality. And probably we are not far wrong in classifying the account of the throne chariot in the same genus, for though similar features are known from Syria yet in the large the whole is patently derived from Babylonian mythological symbolism.

But now what of the "thirtieth year"? As already emphasized, it is futile to attempt a solution of the problem of the dates in the Book of Ezekiel until all the facts are before us. So, just as in previous cases, we now evade the real issue, contenting ourselves with an examination of the possibilities on the assumption that this dating may be authentic.[3] The basic fact to keep in mind, though, is that chapter 1 is correctly placed; there can be no doubt that the experience recounted here is the beginning of Ezekiel's prophetic ministry. And this observation immediately reduces this famous issue by one guess. Since the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity is far too late, then a reckoning from the reform of Josiah, although supported by the hoary authority of the Targum, is automatically excluded. On similar grounds, the conjecture that we should read thirteenth year,[4] even if it had some vestige of textual support, must be ruled out. Plausible as it may appear that Ezekiel should employ the Babylonian reckoning from the accession of Nebuchadrezzar, the interpretation is entirely inadmissible, as--let it be emphasized--is every other that equates this famous date with the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, since Ezekiel was by that time an experienced prophet with years of work behind him.

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[3] Cooke gives a digest of speculations on this problem, Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel (1936), pp. 3, 6-7. See too Kraetschmar, Ezechiel, p. 4, and for a more cursory summary, Bewer, "The Text of Ezekiel 1:1-3," AJSL, L (1934), 96-101.

[4] Apparently first proposed by Luzatto (so Kraetschmar), but accepted recently by Rothstein ("Die heilige Schrift") and Bertholet.

In a different class is the suggestion that the "thirtieth year" is a statement of Ezekiel's age at the time of this profound experience. This also is a very old view but recently advocated afresh by Bewer.[5] However, the one solid advantage of his position, that it leaves open the actual date of Ezekiel's "call" and hence can be harmonized with internal evidence of his oracles as to their time of utterance, Bewer immediately throws away by his effort to authenticate all. He holds that verse 2 is genuine also, hence the event recounted took place in 592 B.C. But, apart from this, the crucial weakness in his argument is that he begs the basic question whether the date in the thirtieth year is genuine.

In yet another class are the theories which rest on the reasonable assumption that the dates throughout the book are from a uniform era, hence obviously the thirtieth year is the latest in the book. The most recent advocates of this position are Berry[6] and Albright.[7] The former believes the incident related in chapter 1 to have occurred at the end of the prophet's career; while Albright thinks the date is that of the publication of the book. Just as in regard to Bewer's theory, we must accord deference to this position. It is a cogent consideration that the dates in the book must be uniform. But Berry's application of this fails on the ground that here is certainly the initial experience of Ezekiel. And Albright's must be dismissed as completely lacking evidence.

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[5] _Op. cit_.; also advocated by Budde, _Journal of Biblical Literature_, L (1931), 29.

[6] "The Title of Ezekiel (1:1-3)," _Journal of Biblical Literature_, LI (1932), 54-57.

[7] "The Seal of Eliakim and the Latest Pre-Exilic History of Judah, with Some Observations on Ezekiel," _Journal of Biblical Literature_, LI (1932), 78-106. For older views of this class see Bewer, _op_. _cit_., pp. 96-97.

It will be seen, then, that every reasonable exit from the dilemma is blocked. So should we turn to textual emendation? But, if so, then what emendation? To read "thirteenth year" probably entails least difficulty. A more severe treatment of the text would give us "third year." This latter avoids most of the difficulties of interpretation; but it is completely lacking evidence or textual probability. Then what are we to do? All proposals advanced are unacceptable for one reason or another; and so, recalling Bertholet's remark that enough headaches have already been caused by the problem, we drop it for the moment completely baffled.

May we hope for better success in seeking an understanding of the presence of the spurious additions to chapter 1? Yes, presumably so; for it will be apparent that the account of the throne chariot is an unusual but still rather characteristic commentator's expansion of the statement in verse 1_b_, "The heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God." If this were genuine, all would be clear. But the sequence from the date in 1_a_ to the beginning of verse 3, which is demanded by all parallels in the book, throws this out of consideration. Still, this result is not so disconcerting as at first appears, for we are long familiar with the phenomenon of commentary on commentary. The situation that forces itself on our acceptance is that some commentator, recognizing the character of the genuine oracle as the initial experience of Ezekiel, embellished it with this statement in 1_b_, aptly put in first person in harmony with Ezekiel's usage. He was a man of deep insight; his addition is one of those rare treasures, brief but worth more than a whole chapter of the tedious redundancies that make up too much of the Book of Ezekiel. That he was a "Babylonian editor" is obvious; his insertion, supported with the similar one in verse 3, has been the major basis for the long tradition that Ezekiel was carried to Babylonia with the first exiles and there after several years began his ministry to his fellow-Jews.

Unfortunately, evidence as to his period is meager in the extreme. It is tempting to date the vision of the throne chariot somewhat early in the Exile, while still the problem of the Lord's care for his lonely people was acute; and this writer undertook an answer by conceiving of his God coming all the long way down from the north by the road on which his people had gone into exile, to find them there in their homeless state. Thus he may have been at any time before, say, the period of Second Isaiah. And since this insertion clearly is of the nature of commentary on verse 1*b*, the latter must have been earlier. But really this is very unstable argument. While confessing some preference for such a view, it must be conceded that there is nothing which certainly precludes a date well into Persian times.

There is little that we need add in regard to the account of the throne chariot, since we are not writing a commentary on the Book of Ezekiel. The bad condition of the text is well known; the utterly prosaic, meticulously cataloguing character of the author's inspiration is likewise familiar. His description more than once oversteps the thin line that separates the sublime from the ridiculous. But in fairness it should be recognized that at last his imagination does take wings, though for but a short flight. We can still feel the reverence and awe with which he sums up his description, "It was a vision of the glory of the Lord; and I fell upon my face and heard a voice that spoke."

The commentators in chapters 2 and 3, whoever they were, had a sense of the wonder of the experience which they undertook to expand. That they were familiar with the accounts of the beginnings of the prophetic careers of Isaiah and Jeremiah is obvious. But, again, their inspiration is limping. When we set their account of Ezekiel's eating (*sic*!) a book alongside the elevated story of Isaiah's hearing the word of the Lord, we can but feel that they could not have more effectively burlesqued a solemn moment if they had deliberately set themselves to do so.

But we waive all this. The chapters yield certain highly valuable results for the problem that still awaits our study. A notable feature is the function of the "spirit." It guides the beasts (1:12); it directs the wheels--indeed, it is resident in the wheels, meaning probably, in the wheels as well as the rest of the contrivance (1:20-21); it comes into Ezekiel when he hears the divine voice and sets him (ותעמדני) upon his feet (2:2); later it lifts him up from the ground (ותשאני נשאתני) and carries him (ותקחני ואלך) to the exiles at Tel Aviv (3:12,14). And this, it is of value to emphasize, is all spurious. Indeed, there is basis for considering that it is secondary even to the spurious account of the throne chariot; for, as Cooke acutely observes, 1:20-21 speak of the creatures under the throne platform in the singular, whereas elsewhere in the chapter the plural is used. But also the intervention of the spirit at this point seems excessive, for the function and the purpose of the creatures were to carry the platform and throne, directly responsive to the will of the Lord. And the character of 12b and 20-21 carries strong implication that they are glosses. It seems probable, then, that there was an editor at work on these chapters, impelled by his belief in the function of the divine spirit.

But as well as the spirit, the "hand of the Lord" is an impelling medium in the account. When Ezekiel was carried by the spirit, the hand of the Lord was strong upon him. And extremely significant for our purpose is the fact that after the interruption of the story by the genuine oracle about his responsibility and then its inevitable spurious expansion (3:16-21), hence perhaps in the narrator's thought immediately after the prophet's being taken to Tel Aviv, it is recorded that "the hand of the Lord was upon me and he said to me, Go forth into the valley, and there I shall speak with you" (3:22). We make no comment at this time; none is called for. But we await the occasion when this will be of high value to us.

XXXII

CHAPTER 8:1 TO CHAPTER 11:13

The literary relation of this section to chapters 1-3 is recognized by all. Its critical problems are similar also; for here, too, it is admitted, secondary matter has been intruded into the original narrative. But we shall not consider it remarkable that no one can command agreement on his identification of that original and the spurious additions. The variety of opinions now circulating it is not relevant for us to summarize. But, without losing ourselves in details, the following facts will suggest an analysis sufficient for our study. Chapter 8 relates Ezekiel's transport to the Temple and the revelation of pagan practices carried on there. This merges easily into the visionary destruction of the Temple and city related in chapter 9. Though the literary connection is thus close, the features of the two chapters are sufficiently diverse to support a charge of independent authorship. But the story, whatever its marvels, has hitherto run in the world of familiar things.[1] Now at the opening of chapter 10, for no apparent reason, the grotesquerie of the beasts and their throne chariot push themselves in. They were not necessary as carriers of the Lord; for the spirit mentioned early in chapter 8 presently turns out it would seem, just as in similar cases in the narratives of Genesis, to be the Lord himself. He, then, it is who conducts the prophet about the defiled Temple, horrifying him with ever greater abominations practiced there; he, too, in chapter 9 commands wholesale destruction. Further, the throne chariot when thus intruded uninvited into the scene serves no immediate function whatever except to provide fire to fill the hands of the scribe; which then he never uses. Or, strictly, the narrator loses interest in his function, for he sends him out to scatter the fire over the city but is too engrossed in staring at the "cherub" to follow and see what the man actually does. And at the end of this we are back in the Temple again (11:1 ff.), in conditions and doings that clearly are the sequel of chapter 8. Only at the close of chapter 11 does the "cherub" appear again to fulfil what now appears to have been its original purpose; it carries the Lord away from his wicked Temple and city: once again a function that was not necessary, for the Lord of chapter 8 is well able to take care of his own locomotion and Ezekiel's at the same time.

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[1] 8:2-3a is obviously foreign to the narrative.

So the fact stands out clear as daylight that the "cherub" is an intrusion. Whatever may have been its relation to the original vision in chapter 1, there can be no doubt of the situation here. At one stroke, then, we relieve ourselves of all that problem. Its patent and admitted relationship to the spurious throne chariot of chapter 1 would have done this anyhow. But as well it is clearly secondary within these chapters.

One might be tempted to bring to a culmination this diversity of chapter 9 from chapter 8 with the consideration that the sequence from the latter is clearly into 11:1; and thus the obvious conclusion would be beyond escape. But, unfortunately, this opening verse of chapter 11 is of dubious originality. The locomotion of the prophet is quite different from that recorded of his movement through the Temple in chapter 8; and, besides, the incident thus introduced is far too slight to constitute the culmination of the ever "greater abominations" traced there. But, on the other hand, if the writer's thought was thus to introduce Jaazaniah in order to record his death as a fitting punishment for these "abominations," this would be quite inadequate for iniquities in which apparently large numbers were entailed throughout, and at the last he was but one of a group of seventy. However, the matter is actually of minor importance; for, interesting as it would be thus to reduce the critical problem of the section by such wholesale slicing, our quest of Ezekiel's original contribution in the now disordered mass of these chapters leads us to evidence of a quite different nature.

Chapter 8 begins in reassuring fashion. The date is of orthodox pattern; we are compelled to admit, though, that it suggests nothing in its present context by which we may test its appropriateness, and presently we shall find occasion to call seriously in question its accuracy. However, the presence of the elders of Judah is not quite so satisfying. As noted already, a similar situation is recorded in 14:1 and 20:1, but in both the wording is, "Men from the elders of Israel came (unto me) and sat before me." The difference here is enough to warrant the belief that at the least the text has been subjected to some tampering. But this is soon eclipsed by troubles that come thick and fast. For, having pushed on beyond this relatively familiar region, we plunge at once into the wilderness. All is strange. Or, strictly, all is foreign to the features of Ezekiel, but much is directly related to the spurious additions in chapters 1-3. Even in this first verse, "The hand of the Lord," on which we found occasion to comment at the close of our study of chapters 1-3, appears once more; in this case it "falls" on Ezekiel, but LXX attests a reading completely in accord with the previous passage, "The hand of the Lord was on me." Then we pass over the obvious intrusion of the "cherub" of chapter 1, who puts forth a hand and, taking Ezekiel by a lock of his hair, carries him dangling precariously, so it would seem according to the traditional arrangement of the text, all the way from Babylonia clear across the desert once more to the Temple courts in Jerusalem. But in verse 3*b* we meet a duplicate that is really of greater interest for us; for there we are told that it was the spirit which thus lifted him (ותשׂא אותי) and brought him home from exile. What need to labor the situation? The facts are eloquent of the spurious character of the narrative. None of this after verse 1*a* has a single feature of Ezekiel's work. And the repeated incidents of the chapter, as the Lord successively "brings" him to certain points of vantage and says certain things to him, fail equally to strike a responsive note. It is all spurious. This conclusion, radical as it would appear if we came de novo to the problem of these chapters, is not at all out of keeping with the situation that became apparent in chapters 1-3, which in turn had anticipation in the critical features of others previously studied. If we may take the position, while still evading final assault on the problem of the dates, that there is some genuine element in verse 1, then just as in these other chapters the commentators have intruded a long passage, separating this original from its proper sequel.

However, it must be admitted that there is a more serious objection to the course thus indicated by the evidence than mere apprehension of a too radical result. The narrative that follows through this chapter reveals an intimate knowledge of the Temple. And the Temple was destroyed, we do well to remember, in 586 B.C. Then does not this familiarity demand an author of that generation: someone who had known the Temple while still standing? And, if so, how can we avoid the proper claims of tradition? Are we not by this route forced to enlarge our repertoire of Ezekiel's literary achievements and admit that this chapter, strange as it is, represents another side of his genius? It is an important question; for the course of our argument, if thrown into reverse, will then compel acceptance of much of chapters 1-3 also. And then we are in the position of all previous critics of the book, with but the opportunity to outdo them in a frankness which confesses that we know nothing whatever about the problem. It is as serious as that. If this chapter be accepted as genuine, then there exist no dependable criteria by which to discriminate in this book between genuine and spurious; we can but employ the valuable testimony of papyrus No. 967 so far as it can take us, directly or by inference, and for the rest throw up our hands admitting that the problem is insoluble.

But, hamdu lillah, we are not yet in that position. For what is this familiarity with the Temple, and how much does it imply? First, there is some little knowledge of the

Temple plan. The account speaks of the gate that looks north, the gate of the court, the gate of the "house of the Lord" which looks north, the inner court, the door of the hekal, the porch, the altar, and private chambers. It mentions as well certain cult paraphernalia: the "image of jealousy," wall reliefs that were treated as sacred symbols, and censers. Then also the writer claims some familiarity with cult practices of the Temple of Ezekiel's time. There is the adoration of the wall reliefs with the use of censers; the women weep for Tammuz. And hard by the very door of the hekal men stand with their backs to the Lord, while they worship the sun eastward. Now certainly there is nothing in this architectural information that might not have been possessed by almost any Jew for a thousand years; the information is meager and at most deals with well-known, one might almost say with axiomatic, features of the Temple. The cult practices, likewise, show no remarkable familiarity with pre-Exilic Jerusalem. It is very interesting to have this definite statement that the cult of Tammuz was followed in the Temple; of the sun worship one might make the same noncommittal remark; the worship of wall reliefs scarce calls for notice when we recall that even the orthodox cult featured such sacred symbols (I Kings 6:29,32,35). The accounts of the increasing depravity of the Temple worship through the Assyrian period and the catalogue of pagan objects carried out in the reform of Josiah leave none of this surprising. Nor should we forget that this source of information was accessible to post-Exilic Jews as well as to us. In addition, they possessed, we may well believe, much which has since disappeared without leaving a trace: traditions and tales carried down for generations. And, besides, pagan practices were by no means stamped out by the disaster of 586 but continued in Palestine for ages, certainly to the reform of Ezra, and some passages would lead us to believe much longer. So that the conduct hinted at in this chapter was more or less familiar to Jews for ages. There are only two features of the account which still deserve mention: the "branch to the nose" and the "image of jealousy." The former is of such uncertain meaning that nothing can be deduced from it indicative of a special knowledge of pre-Exilic customs. Indeed, if those who regard it as a reference to Zoroastrian ritual are anywhere in the right direction (which is doubtful), the implication would rather be of directly the opposite sort; for it is incredible, if not indeed impossible, that Zoroastrian cult practice was known in Jerusalem at the end of the kingdom. Such knowledge, if actual, argues a late date. However, one hesitates over the claim here presented that at the northern door of the court of the Temple there stood in the days of Zedekiah a special image, not otherwise known. While the uniqueness of the information robs it of corroboration, yet we must give the writer some credit for veracity and accuracy, and accept the information as correct. Then wa he necessarily an inhabitant of Jerusalem in the days of the kings?

This word סמל ("image"?) is quite rare; it occurs onl five times: in Deut. 4:16 and II Chron. 33:7 and 15, besides its repetition here in verses 3 and 5. Its etymology and exact meaning are uncertain. But a fact of more than passing significance is that in the account of Manasseh's wickedness in II Chronicles, chapter 33, it occurs in verse 7 as the equivalent of אשרה ("asherah") in the parallel narrative in II Kings 21:7. The identity of the two passages is so complete as to leave no doubt that the writer of Chronicles definitely meant to equate the two words and thus give his testimony that the word *asherah* was by the third century B.C. sometimes replaced by סמל.[2] The use in Deuteronomy, while not *demanding* this value, yet with its qualifying phrase, a male or female form, is mildly suggestive of it. Now the word המקנה in Ezek. 8:3 is a gloss on הקנאה ("jealousy"), as is apparent from a comparison with verse 5; its purpose is to show that the root here is not קנא ("be jealous") but קנה ("possess"). And the qualifying word then means "that gives (or causes) increase." The concurrence of these lines of evidence shows clearly, then, that we deal here not at all with "the image of jealousy" but with "the *asherah* that gives increase."[3] But is not the location given for this *asherah* the same as that in verse 14? The evidence of LXX indicates that הפנימית ("the inner") is to be omitted from verse 3; and then the major difference in the descriptions of the places becomes the specification by verse 14 that it was the northern gate of "the house of the Lord"; but surely this is equally implied in verse 3. If we are correct in this identification, then the women weep for Tammuz near, or in front of, this "*asherah* that gives increase": a most appropriate place for the rite.

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[2] The former occurs in several passages in Chronicles but commonly under the influence of the original in Kings.

The application of all this to our immediate problem is apparent. The word סמל is late, though indeed its use in Deuteronomy, chapter 4, *might* be claimed as roughly contemporary with Ezekiel.[4] However, the nature of this idolatrous figure that stood at the north gate of the Temple sweeps away the last vestige of a claim of special knowledge manifested in Ezekiel, chapter 8. The presence of an *asherah* in the Temple in the closing days of the kingdom was well known in the time of the Chronicler; and that provides all that is necessary for our purpose.

After this lengthy digression, as it may have seemed, we resume our study of the problem of chapters 8-11. We find nothing then in chapter 8, beyond verse 1*a*, to commend itself as genuine. Chapter 9 has still less claim on our attention, quite apart from considerations already advanced indicating that it is secondary even to the spurious contents of chapter

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[3] S. I. Feigin: *Missitrei Heavar*, New York (1943), p. 69. For an interesting theory of the etymology of *semel* see W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (1942), p. 221, n. 121. Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (1939), cites (p. 421) a tradition that has relevance at this point. He says: "One of the most sinful acts of this generation (*sc*. Ezekiel's) was the fashioning of 'the image of jealousy" which was an abomination in the eyes of the Lord. By means of witchcraft they had fashioned out of stone two figures, a male and a female, embracing one another like husband and wife."

[4] Actually there is no doubt that Deuteronomy, chap. 4, is of late date.

8. And this opinion is even more cogent in regard to chapter 10. Then, as we saw above, the narrative of chapter 8 resumes, whether by the same author or another, in 11:1. But it is still spurious; its contents declare this. However, arrived thus at long last in 11:2-3, we find something of greater interest. This has the "feel" of Ezekiel. Better, verse 3 contains metrical material. And verse 5 introduces a response with the imperative אמר ("say"), in the true style of Ezekiel; 5a, another "spirit" passage, is obviously spurious: it is uncertain, too, how much is added after אמר כה אמר יהוה ("Say, thus says the Lord"): perhaps all. But verse 6 also is metrical. The status of verse 4 is dubious; Ezekiel is elsewhere commanded to prophesy, but this is never in a response and never with the introductory particle לכן ("therefore"). It is best to ignore the verse. In 6a it is best to read מתיכם ("your dead") with LXX and thus avoid repetition. The metrical lines then are:

לא בקרוב   בנות בתים
היא הסיר   ואנחנו הבשׂר

Not at present
  should we build houses.
It's the pot,
  and we're the flesh

and

הרביתם מתיכם בעיר הזאת   ומלאתם חוצות חלל

You have slaughtered many in this city
  and filled its streets with slain.

Here, certainly, we have genuine material. And, to add to our confidence, the commentary follows in characteristic form with its repeated לכן כה אמר יהוה ("therefore, thus says the Lord"), its citation of the oracle, its "knowing that I am the Lord," and its charge that Israel's conduct had been like that of the nations. Clearly, the strange intrusion of chapters 8-10 has come to an end; now the typical material of the Book of Ezekiel resumes. But the section has this similarity to much that we have seen elsewhere and most recently in chapters 1-3 that the introduction is separated by a long intrusion from its real sequel in the genuine oracle. The circumstances described in 8:1a relate to the oracle in 11:2 ff., not to the narrative of the mystic visit to the Temple. More pointedly, "these men" mentioned in 11:2 are not Jaazaniah and Pelatiah and their associates of verse 1 but rather the "elders of Judah" of 8:1. And this disposes, then, of the death of Pelatiah (11:13) that has occasioned so much speculation as to its actuality or symbolism. Ezekiel had nothing to do with it; the real murderer is to be sought among the many commentators on this chapter. If the author of verse 4 should be cleared of suspicion, at least he is guilty of the suggestion that roused the real killer! Who were Jaazaniah and Pelatiah anyhow? Why should mention of these otherwise unknown men carry such weight of conviction as most modern commentators concede? It is an easy sort of indoor sport to create fictitious characters and then kill them off like flies. Just as in regard to other incidents recorded in the Old Testament, modern commentators have been too gullible, accepting as obvious veracity what is no more than an ability to tell a plausible story.

But modern commentators have found difficulty with verse 3 as well; so much, indeed, as to agree in general that the text must be corrupt. LXX and Vulgate are cited as corroborative evidence, without ever inquiring whether their variant reading is not but an anticipation of the misunderstanding that now has become uniform. For the common view is that the princes of Jerusalem had proclaimed the arrival of an opportune time for rebuilding, stating that the strong walls of the city protected them: behind them they were as snug as meat within a pot. And this result, doubtless induced by verse 7, is reached by the very simple expedient of making verse 3 a question. But a number of objections arise. Verse 7 cannot be understood as giving an interpretation of the oracle favorable to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. It merely says that the fate of the bad leaders will be immensely worse than that of the dead, who alone will remain within the walls of Jerusalem. But the chief difficulty is intrinsic. Where are we told positively that Ezekiel was opposed to rebuilding the devastations of 597 B.C.? Why should he have denounced as evil counsel this suggestion? More serious is the very cogent evidence of 24:1-5 that this saying about the pot and the flesh had exactly the opposite force from that now commonly ascribed to it here. And, indeed, should this not have been apparent from the first? Who would think of claiming that meat is safe in a cooking pot? From the double occurrence of the phrase, we may deduce the existence of an ancient proverb or popular saying, not unlike our "Out of the frying pan and into the fire." Its meaning obviously was that folk in a besieged city are "in a hot spot" and in a fair way to finding it growing ever hotter. And this is entirely fitting and harmonious with the circumstances of this oracle as we can understand them.

But here another gratuitous assumption of exegetes makes its appearance, for we are told that it is rebuilding to which verse 3 refers. Why so? The Hebrew language is entirely competent to speak of such restoration when it is desirable to do so. The passage merely says, "The time is not near for building houses." There is no reason why this should be associated with reconstruction of the devastations of 597 B.C. To claim a delay of six years, as the date in 8:1 would imply, for reconstruction which every consideration of personal comfort and well-being demanded be done at once, is to attribute too much to the indolence of the people of Jerusalem. On the contrary, the allusion is apparently to normal construction required by the common life of the city. The urge to this came, it is clear, not from the leaders but from the people's own needs. But at this point the rulers intervened with their warning that the time was not propitious for such pacific activities. They were all together in a very tight corner. The supreme need of the hour was military; and the demands of the city's defense might not be impaired by useless undertakings which could wait until the crisis had passed.[5] Every effort must be exerted toward the defeat of the Chaldeans.

But why should Ezekiel have taken exception to this seemingly innocent and eminently sound advice? The common interpretation, which we have criticized, provides a blameless counsel; then what evil can we find in this? The answer must be, "None at all!" The advice was every whit as innocuous as it appears. Ezekiel's criticism was not of the advice but of the wrong policies that had entailed it. These were the men whose bad leadership had brought Jerusalem to its present predicament, so that now there was no time for normal peaceful occupations.[6]

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[5] Cf. Isa. 22:10.

The assigned date of the oracle (8:1) is 6/6/5. While we have noted that this is too late for the usual interpretation that the building is that entailed by the ravages of 597 B.C., equally it is too early for the situation which the contents of the oracle proclaim. The siege has begun; indeed, it would appear that it had progressed some distance. No date earlier than 9/10/10 is acceptable.[7] But there is no support for emendation, and none lies close to the present text. The one conclusion, which then must be noted for final study of this problem, is that the date is certainly wrong.

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[6] As a matter of fact, this interpretation is demanded by the Hebrew. If Ezekiel had meant that vs. 3 is the substance of the bad advice of which he is so critical, he would have introduced it by ויאמרו ("and have said") instead of האמרים ("who are saying"). The participles have the force of: "These habitually bad counsellors are now saying, It's no time for building houses."

[7] Cf. 24:1.

XXXIII

CHAPTER 37

The vision of the valley of dry bones is justly one of the most famous passages in the Book of Ezekiel. But our concern at this time is not an appraisal of the certainly high religious values of the chapter but the more prosaic task of untangling its critical problem. And this will take short time, for its two types of critical features are by now well known. The divisions of the chapter are clear; verses 1-14 recount the vision of the valley of dry bones and verses 15-28 contain the oracle of the union of the sticks of Judah and Joseph. The types of critical problem correspond to these divisions.

The first section declares its character immediately; for in the first verse we meet both the hand of the Lord and the spirit of the Lord as mediums of the writer's inspiration, though it is possible that the latter is intruded. But, in any case, the similarity of the verse to 3:21 declares its affiliation and origin. It is too much to claim that it is from the same author; on the contrary, if both phrases in this verse are original, then it would appear that we deal rather with an imitator who thus sought to claim both manifestations of the divine working. The similarity of the section to chapter 8 will also be evident. It has the same supernatural conduct, whether by hand or spirit, the same heaping-up of incident on incident, but too the same unity of all within a single objective. It differs, however, in its repeated use of the true Ezekelian phrase, "son of man"; and, too, there is a frequent haunting metrical quality. But this proves a false lead, for no more than disconnected scraps of "poetry" can be made out, save by drastic textual methods. And toward the end we encounter also our old acquaintance, "knowing that I am the Lord," and also the less frequent but still trite repetition, "I, the

Lord, have spoken and will act." It is possible that verses 12 ff. are secondary. In any case, verse 13 declares itself as trite commentary on verse 12. And verse 14 is reminiscent of the famous "conversion" passages, 36:24 ff. and 11:17 ff.

The critical result of such facts needs no argument. Contrary to the opinion of the entire body of scholarship, except Hölscher alone, the section cannot be genuine.[1] There is no basis for postulating authorship by Ezekiel; we refuse to be misled by the repeated "son of man," for this feature is too easy to imitate. On the whole, the characteristics of the passage are remote from everything that we have learned of Ezekiel. Its closest affinities are with chapters 3 and 8. Herntrich properly draws attention to this fact but then uses it against Hölscher and for defense of genuineness --naturally, since he missed his way in those earlier chapters.

Verses 12-13 declare an origin outside Palestine; their heightening of the suggestion of personal resurrection, only lightly implied in verses 1-11, seems to indicate a quite late date. And this would be modestly supported by the promise of the spirit in verse 14, for we have seen reason to date the "conversion" passages far down toward the present era. Many critics, on the other hand, argue from the word בקעה ("valley") in verse 1 that the vision proper was written in Palestine. Apart from that meager evidence, little can be said. Also the date is uncertain. The fact that Israel's bones are said to be very dry would imply that the fall of the nation is in the far past. On the other hand, the situation implied would indicate a time before the rebuilding of the people that set in as a result of the work of Nehemiah. The mood of the passage parallels the glowing hopes of Second Isaiah, and a time roughly contemporary would fit such meager evidence as we possess. But that is all we can say. Like hosts of men who made worthy contribution to the ongoing life and destiny of Israel, the author hid himself completely behind his work. His achievement is so high that one almost feels himself a "profane person" in seeking thus to pry into pettifogging details. Rather, we would stand a moment in reverence before passing on where our task leads.

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[1] The word "genuine" will probably suffice to cover Torrey's views as well as the more orthodox within this generalization.

The second section of the chapter brings us at once into just the opposite situation. Interest is quickened by the opening words; and, with a feeling that now "our foot is on our native heath," we push on past the long-familiar introductory phrase and, just as one might hope, into poetic structure. The passage has been considerably expanded, but such glosses are apparent. All that was written on the sticks was "For Judah" and "For Joseph";[2] in verse 17 apparently the words לך לעץ אחד ("to you for one stick") are excessive; also, with LXX, we should presumably omit ואתה ("and you") in 16 and read קחלך ("take for yourself") in 16*b*, just as in 16*a*. Then a triad, in Ezekiel's characteristic style, emerges:

קח־לך עץ אחד   וכתב עליו ליהודה
וקח־לך עץ אחד   וכתב עליו ליוסף
וקרב אתם אחד אל־אחד   והיו לאחדים בידך

Take one stick
    and write on it "Judah."
And take another stick
    and write on it "Joseph."
Then bring them one to another,
    so that they are united in your hand.

The repetition in the first two lines is not reassuring; it is more noticeable than in chapters 4 and 5, with which this is commonly compared. Still, whatever uneasiness we may confess, there is not sufficient evidence for rejecting the passage. Holscher is extreme in regarding it as merely a literary imitation; the marks of genuine authorship are distinctive and characteristic. Ezekiel's formal phraseology and style are so simple that a careful student might well have produced a convincing counterfeit; but we have not found evidence that such actually did happen. The repetition of

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[2] Cf. Hölscher, Bertholet, Cooke, *ad. loc*.

בךאדם ("son of man") in the first section of the chapter is a clumsy imitation which but serves, by contrast, to authenticate the present passage.

As elsewhere, the oracle is provided with interpretation, in anticipation of inquiry by the people. Indeed, there are two of these introduced in verses 19 and 21 with identical phraseology. This differs from some such passages in its use of the imperative of דבר ("speak"), not אמר ("say"); also verse 18 has the unusual expression, בני עמך ("sons of your people"). Yet both these are sufficiently attested that we may not rule them spurious. One of the problems facing us here, then, is to decide between the two interpretations. It will be seen that the first, in verse 19, repeats largely the wording of the oracle, even to its glosses, except that the Lord is represented as announcing his own action. The second, verses 21-22, repeats this latter feature, but instead of the symbolism employed hitherto it has concrete statement. In other words, this alone is real interpretation. Since Ezekiel's explanations have commonly been simple and clear, we must in harmony with Bertholet's action decide in favor of the second. But verse 19 has a feature that merits attention. It is too simple to interpret the evidence of LXX as demonstrating an original, ונתתי על־עץ יהודה ("and I will set it upon the stick of Judah"). On the contrary, probabilities are rather for ונתתי עליו עץ יהודה ("and I will set the stick of Judah upon it"). So the stick of Judah is to be set on, or attached to, that of Joseph! For this writer "Joseph" is the real Israel; his thought, like that of the author of the Blessing of Moses, appears to be that Judah had seceded from Israel. Surely this is not a Jew but an Israelite. But, then, was this book subjected at some late time to Israelite editing? It is to be observed that the oracle itself avoids partisanship: Ezekiel is merely to bring the two sticks together, then they will unite in his hand. The genuine interpretation also shows a generous indifference to the rivalries of North and South. If our textual result in verse 19 is sound, we have, then, in this feature additional evidence of the spuriousness of the first interpretation.

The limits of the genuine interpretation are not obvious. Metrical form continues through verse 21. The occurrence of the word קבץ ("gather"), which hitherto we have found in passages originating in the Diaspora, does not obviate the result, for significant difference will be noted in the phraseology. In those the gathering was from the lands and peoples; here it is "from round about," that is, evidently, from Ezekiel's environment, immediate and more remote. Major uncertainty relates to verse 22. With some measure of more or less defensible paring poetic form can be followed throughout, but the verb עשה ("make") has occurred only in the spurious interpretation; the oracle used instead היה ("be"). Mention of the mountains of Israel is redundant, hence unlike Ezekiel; also the attribution of royalist hopes to him is highly suspicious. It seems probable that the original was approximately this:

הנה אני לקח   את־בני ישראל
מבין הגוים   אשר הלכו־שם

וקבצתי אתם מסביב   והבאתי אתם אל־אדמתם
ולא יהיו־עוד שני גוים   ולא־יחצו עוד לשתי ממלכות

Behold, I am about to take
  the sons of Israel
from among the nations
  whither they have gone.

I will gather them from round about,
  and will bring them to their own land.
Then they shall no more be two nations
  nor be divided into two kingdoms.

The balance of the chapter is of characteristic commentary from different hands. David is variously נשיא ("prince") and מלך ("king"); the Temple is מקדש ("sanctuary") and משכן ("dwelling").[3] But all is of the typical nature of idyllic hopes for the restored Israel, such as we have met several times already.

The terminology of the oracle calls for a comment. Ezekiel's usual title for his people is בית ישראל ("House of

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[3] I am indebted to my colleague, Dr. S. I. Feigin, for drawing my attention to these features.

Israel"); but here he employs the two tribal names, Joseph and Judah. However, this is clearly demanded by the nature of his theme. More notable is that the interpretation speaks of בני ישראל ("sons of Israel"). But again this divergence from his usage is well calculated to express his reference to all Israel, not merely the Kingdom of Judah.

The existence of this oracle as a genuine utterance of Ezekiel is a remarkable feature of his work. Here is basis, in addition to what we have already found, for retaining the traditional belief in his ministry of comfort, notwithstanding that most of such passages in the book are spurious. But more notable is the character of this message of comfort, how he envisaged the reunion of Israel, separated for four hundred years with the northern tribes scattered for a century and a half through the region from Palestine to Iran. And all together are to be restored to Palestine! It is out of the question that this could have been uttered while Ezekiel was still in Jerusalem during the trying years of Zedekiah's reign; for his attitude to his fellow-citizens then was one of consistent denunciation and threat. Equally, the two "sticks" in the oracle seem to be in identical situation, and all "the sons of Israel" are to be brought back to their land and united into a single people. It can only be that this is a word from Ezekiel in his exile in Babylonia, probably the result of long years of thought and musing there. There, it would seem, he had come somehow in touch with survivors of the northern tribes, still preserving their Israelite identity,[4] and their common exile and Israelite lineage prompted the conviction that, in the purposes of God, Israel would again be one people in the land of their fathers. One wonders whether his hope may yet at this remote distance find a sort of realization in some working understanding between the declining Samaritan community and the Jewish population of Palestine.

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[4] The story of Tobit suggests itself as relevant.

XXXIV

CHAPTERS 40-48

The grouping-together of the chapters of this large and important part of the Book of Ezekiel for unified treatment at once suggests the limitations proposed for its discussion. There is here no thought of undertaking a full examination of the critical problems or a detailed analysis of the section but merely of confining ourselves to the simple question of how much comes from the hand of the prophet Ezekiel.

The predominant mood of the newer criticism is to deny in toto Ezekiel's authorship of the section whether of the whole or of any part: so Hölscher, Herntrich, Harford, Berry,[1] Möhlenbrink,[2] Schmidt,[3] and Matthews, to mention but the more familiar. On the other hand, Cooke and Galling[4] believe there exists a kernel of genuine material in the chapters. Heinisch,[5] Kittel,[6] and Torrey[7] are more generous, accepting the chapters as largely, if not entirely, of unified authorship with chapters 1-39. Heinisch, true to the common character of his work, is scarcely conscious of a problem. Kittel's well-known dictum that there were two souls within Ezekiel's breast provides the grounds for his attitude here that chapters 40 ff. reveal an author who had long served in the Temple. Torrey finds evidence of the late origin of the section which accords well with his theory of the pseudonymous authorship of the Book of Ezekiel about 230 B.C. Cooke sees Ezekiel as "the most practical of reformers, and not only a prophet, but a priest, deeply concerned with the organization of religion in the community of the future. We can imagine him poring over architectural plans and regulations for worship, when he fell into an ecstasy, and seemed to be transported from Babylonia to the land of Israel."[8] The arguments of Galling constitute the most serious of recent attempts to reinstate the chapters. He first replies to Möhlenbrink's view that the plan of "Ezekiel's" Temple is based on that of the second Temple, hence obviously is subsequent to 515 B.C., sweeping away, as he believes, the three adduced reasons for the late dating of these chapters. Then he advances two considerations pointing to an early date. First, citing the different levels required in the floors of the Temple proper and the Holy of Holies by the slope of the underlying rock, and arguing from the divergent treatment of this problem by the author of these chapters from that of the Solomonic Temple, he concludes that the former was taking account of the heaps of rubbish, in particular unburnt brick, which lay in the Temple after the destruction of 586 B.C. He grants freely, however, that this feature would be equally valid for the construction of the second Temple, hence this argument achieves no more than establishing the possibility of an early dating ("Möglichkeit einer Frühdatierung"). It is an admission which removes all worth from his argument; hence his contention for genuine authorship rests entirely upon his second consideration. This takes account of two facts. The purpose of the large building, 70 by 90 cubits, at the west of the Temple is not explained. Indeed, Galling's conclusion seems to be that it had no purpose and was included in the plan only because such a building existed in the Temple prior to 586 B.C., and thus the author might not omit it. The second fact is that the court is provided with three doors instead of the four that we should naturally expect; here again, Galling holds, is a reminiscence of the seventh-century Temple. From these two considerations he deduces that the plan of the Temple is sketched by an eyewitness of the catastrophe of 586 B.C. The date assigned in 40:1 is, he believes, probable in the light of the historic circumstances. And this leads to the conclusion that the prophet Ezekiel can very well have been the author--to which he adds as a final consideration the use of first person in the narrative of 40:1 ff.

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[1] JBL, XXXIV (1915), pp. 17-40; ibid., XL (1921), 70-75.

[2] Der Tempel Salomos (1932), p. 32 ff.

[3] Der heilige Fels in Jerusalem (1933), p. 49.

[4] In Bertholet's Hesekiel (1936) Kurt Galling wrote sec. 5 of the Einleitung, "Zu Ez. 40-45," and treats in the commentary 40-42, 43:10-17.

[5] Das Buch Ezechiel übersetzt und erklärt (1923).

[6] Geschichte Volkes Israel (1927).

[7] Pseudo-Ezekiel, p. 100.

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[8] Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel (1936), p. 425; he has also a more extended argument in ZAW, XLII (1924), 105-15.

Galling's views are based on archeological evidence, an area in which his competence is well recognized. To follow him into these arguments in regard to the gates of the pre-Exilic Temple would lead us far afield. Our present purpose will be sufficiently served if we concede for the sake of argument the soundness of this side of his reasoning and confine ourselves to his application of all to the problem of the authorship of these chapters.

It will be noted that his argument based on the large building at the rear of the Temple is but an argument from silence, the instability of which is proverbial. It is not at all necessary that the author's silence as to the purpose of this structure is to be explained as Galling deduces. The confusion of these chapters is one of their most generally recognized features. Why, then, may it not be that the statement of purpose has merely fallen out of the original text? It could well have been a very brief explanation that could easily have been overlooked. Or, perhaps, the author himself missed his way in his own description and frankly forgot his intention to tell the use of the building. Perhaps, too, it was so well known that he saw no necessity to say anything about it. These are guesses, presented boldly and unabashed. But so is Galling's explanation. And the purpose of the present guessing is merely to show that his has no better validity

But doubtless Galling would retort, "Why should the purpose of this building have been well known in some later time?" The question is basic for his argument about the doors also. It is important to emphasize that we are too prone, specifically Galling in this line of argument, to suppose that a great wall of ignorance isolates the time of the kingdoms from the thinking of post-Exilic Judaism. So as he first argued from silence, Galling now argues from ignorance. But may not that ignorance be ours and not that of the Jews? Actually evidence and probabilities point in just this direction; institutions and practices persisted tenaciously. And, further, why do we constantly assume that a knowledge of the times of the kings must be traditional? The considerable bulk of pre-Exilic literature which we now possess was also accessible to the Jews of post-Exilic times. They had our Books of Kings, with the description of the Temple; in addition, they had doubtless rich sources, oral and perhaps written, that have since perished. A knowledge of conditions of the days of the kings much more extensive than the meager facts on which Galling bases his conclusions would not at all demand an early date but only that the author was a reasonably intelligent and educated Jew. And, indeed, this is the furthest that Galling's argument would take us even if he had succeeded in demonstrating that these chapters are from about 573 B.C. Was Ezekiel the only intelligent or literate Jew of that period? The question needs but to be asked for the absurdity of the entire position to be apparent. Such a date could do no more than establish the possibility of authorship by Ezekiel. Demonstration of its actuality demands careful, detailed examination of style and minor features of mental habit to detect, if possible, Ezekiel's characteristics.

Similarly futile is Galling's parting shot that the structure of the narrative in first person in 40:1 ff. is a corroborative feature. Far too much has been made by critics of the *ich* and *er* differentiations in the books of the prophets; it is important to have had our attention drawn to it, but its significance is commonly overdone. In the present case it is peculiarly empty; for on the background of our study of chapters 1-3, 8-11, and 37, it is apparent that many spurious imitators of Ezekiel copied this feature of his work

--a feature which of all literary devices is easiest to counterfeit. But, if in turn we may now imitate Galling to the extent of a final disconnected remark, it is worth noting that even Bertholet is not convinced by Galling's argument, for he remarks (op. cit. p. 170) that it remains uncertain after a critical study of these chapters how much of them is from Ezekiel, if indeed he comes into consideration at all as their author.

So the recent effort to reinstate the genuineness of chapters 40-48 is a failure. But that is not equivalent to denying it. As mentioned just now, the crux of the issue is their literary characteristics. In our study hitherto we have become familiar with a distinctive and remarkably uniform style of Ezekiel's utterances. This has been so regular and typical that it may by this time be employed with some considerable confidence as a touchstone of genuineness.

Chapter 40 begins with the date 25/1/10. The only other dates in the book comparably high are in 29:17, which is 27/1/1, and 1:1, which is 30/4/5. Recognizing freely that this entire problem still awaits attention, with the possibility that all alike may prove spurious, it yet promises some value to adduce the evidence of these two as to the normalcy of the date here. First of all, 40:1 does not begin with the verb ויהי ("and it was"),[9] as do both the others. Moreover, this has been almost uniform throughout the book, the one exception being 29:1, which alone is like this one in beginning with a bald statement of the year. Fortunately 29:17 resembles 40:1 also in that its month is the first, as is the case in 30:20 as well. But both these use the simple phrase בראשון ("in the first"), while the present passage has בראש השנה ("at the beginning of the year"). The citation of the day is uniform throughout the book. But now this dating in 40:1 is referred to "our captivity." Only two passages provide opportunity for comparison; 1:2 has "to the captivity of King Jehoiachin" (לגלות המלך יויכין);

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[9] But LXX evidences this word, a fact heavily discounted, however, by the confusion of LXX readings in this verse.

33:21 has the same word as 40:1 but appropriately put at the end of the complete date, not as here immediately after the year. As in chapter 1, chapter 40 provides a secondary dating by another era, in this case from the destruction of Jerusalem, to which there is no parallel in the book.

The narrative then commences with the verb היה ("was"), just as in all other dated passages except 1:1, 8:1, and 20:1; but here it is in the feminine, as demanded by the subject. But the story is that "the hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me there." Verse 2 follows with the parallel statement that "he brought me in visions of God." In verse 3 a supernatural man appears, who is to conduct the author about the visionary Temple and city. Then in verse 4 we first reach direct narration, introducted by וידבר אלי האיש ("and the man spoke to me"); and the utterance is, "Son of man, see with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and set your heart to all that I am to show you; for you were brought here to be shown these. Declare to the House of Israel all that you see."

The conclusion demanded by this opening passage will already be apparent. It is totally lacking in similarity to Ezekiel's work, save in the one phrase, "son of man," which, it is not necessary to comment, is too easily copied to have any critical significance. Whether or not most of the other dates in the book are genuine, the formula here diverges widely from their accepted usage. If they should prove spurious, then we have no criteria by which to demonstrate that this one is Ezekiel's. However, the identity with 33:21 in a dating from "our captivity" proves an evil companionship, for we have already seen that this passage is clearly inserted by the "Babylonian editor." Further, the narrative has its relations with the passages in chapters 1-3, 8-11, and 37 that speak of the "spirit," "the hand of the Lord," and the "visions of God." The present occurrence provides no grounds for revising our earlier decision that they are spurious. But this is not from the same writers but merely an imitation of their work. And, finally, the direct narration is completely unlike Ezekiel's. Instead of the almost uniform use in Ezekiel's oracles of the introduction, ויהי דבר יהוה אלי לאמר בן־אדם ("and the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man"), here we have וידבר אלי האיש בן־אדם ("and the man spoke to me, Son of man"). The two expression are identical to the length of three words!

It is in the direct narration that we have found Ezekiel's poetry. But verse 4 is the most prosy of prose. Ezekiel has not infrequently begun a passage with הנה ("Behold"), as does verse 5, but still this is unmitigated prose. Further the content of this revelation is remote from the character of Ezekiel's oracles; instead of a brief, pointed, or even cryptic presentation of a political or religious circumstance of his people, here are lengthy and tedious architectural specifications. Such associations as are suggested connect with the prose narrative of conduct about the Temple given in chapter 8 rather than with genuine oracles. In 43:10 attention is attracted by the phrase, אתה בן־אדם ("you, Son of man"); but again it is a false lead. Verse 18 is still more interesting; to a considerable length it reproduces phraseology that is familiar from the first thirty-nine chapters, whether there genuine or not. And one could force the direct narration of the verse into a semblance of poetic form, for it is as good as some of Cooke's raw material. But one turns away with a sense of frustration. Poetry is something more than chopped-up prose. And in the sequel the content is still the unadulterated tedium through which one wades in these chapters. However, from this point onward the introductory כה אמר יהוה ("thus says the Lord") is scattered at intervals through the descriptions, serving to establish a sort of "homey" feeling in an otherwise foreign environment. But for our purpose that is all. The first twelve verses of chapter 47 are one of the great passages in the section if not even in the entire book. But in structure they are one with their environment; they have nothing to commend them as from the prophet Ezekiel.

The conclusion need not be elaborated. There is nothing whatever in these nine chapters that reveals even slight relationship with the genuine work of Ezekiel. The authors are patently imitating; but their models are certain spurious intrusions in chapters 1-39. They ignore entirely the oracles of Ezekiel, save for sparing use of the phrase אתה בן־אדם and כה אמר יהוה--if actually the latter is copied from Ezekiel. There is not basis whatever for postulating genuine authorship, except only that these chapters are included in the Book of Ezekiel. In view of the immense bulk of spurious matter in chapters 1-39, this becomes a peculiarly empty claim. And we recall for our guidance and warning the history of the books of the prophets as indicated by the structure of the Book of Isaiah. Those who wish to imagine that Ezekiel wrote chapters 40-48 of his book, or any part of them, may continue to do so; there is no other apparent ground for their opinion.

CONCLUSIONS

I

THE DATES

The investigation is complete. But, before we may properly go on to more general conclusions, we must give attention to the contentious issue of the dates that are found scattered irregularly through the book. The available facts in regard to them are all in hand. An initial statement is that the following occur:

Chapter 1 vs. 1, year 30, month 4, day 5

1:2	5/ * / 5
8:1	6/6/5
20:1	7/5/10
24:1	9/10/10
26:1	11/*/1
29:1	10/10/12
29:17	27/1/1
30:20	11/1/7
31:1	11/3/1
32:1	12/12/1
32:17	12/*/15
33:21	12/5/10
40:1	25/1/1

*No number is given in the Hebrew text.

That is, there are fourteen dated passages or incidents, when we count 1:2 as distinct from 1:1 and include 40:1.

But it has already been observed that 33:21 is by the so-called "Babylonian editor"; and 40:1 is likewise spurious. Then 8:1, 32:1, and 32:17 are certainly wrong, and it is immaterial whether we accept the reading of the Hebrew or the Greek for the latter two. One might conceivably defend 31:1 if the dedication of the poem to Pharaoh is correct, though even then, as the last of the anti-Egyptian oracles, it would have advanced to a point that strains all probability. This objection would be waived by accepting the evidence of papyrus No. 967 and MS Q to read tenth year. But the uncertainty of exegesis and the confused testimony of LXX leave all in doubt; at the best this date is uncertain.

However, there remains an area of dependability. We have noted the accuracy of 24:1 and 29:17. Also 26:1, 29:1, and 30:20 are in all probability correct, though we lack precise historical information by which to check them. It is tempting also to explain the visit of the elders (20:1) as in some way related to the growing political perplexities of the little kingdom; in that case its date, 7/5/10, would be appropriate. The two remaining dates, in 1:1 and 1:2, are of personal relevance, hence difficult to check. But the call of the prophet has in other cases been commonly associated with some circumstance of national interest or importance. Yet if the thirtieth year of verse 1 is to be equated with the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, as claimed by verse 2, we are at a loss to find such relevance for the beginning of Ezekiel's ministry. However, we shall presently survey reasons for considering this latter date too late by perhaps seven or eight years. And, in any case, verse 2 is indubitably a harmonistic gloss, as is evident, *inter alia*, by the fact that the normal sequence of the formula leads direct from 1*a* into 3. The intrusive character of this verse is so obvious that one wonders how any critic has ever undertaken to establish its genuineness. But then to cut verse 1*a* free from association with the year 592 B.C. is not equivalent to authenticating it. Instead, the diversity of its era of reference from all other dates in the book makes it a separate problem in itself. Whether this means that it alone is genuine or that it is intruded by some independent glossator must be seriously considered. At the very least it would be passing strange if one and the same writer should introduce into a series of dates so few as the group in this book one that stands alone in complete diversity from all the rest; still more incomprehensible when he made no gesture of resolving the enigma, but left the task to a commentator's guess.

But, leaving this for the moment, the situation clarifies itself in these terms. Of the fourteen dates, three may be dismissed at once as clearly spurious; three are certainly wrong, and since Ezekiel should surely have known the time and circumstances of his own utterances these must likewise be adjudged spurious. By contrast, two are eminently correct, three others probably, and a fourth possibly so. The remaining two are 31:1 and 1:1; the former is too uncertain for any conclusion, and the second is in a class by itself. The issue then hangs primarily on the group of six dates that with greater or less certainty can be accepted as correct. To repeat for clarity, they are 24:1, 29:17; and 26:1, 29:1, 30:20; and 20:1.

But among these there are three divergences from normal formula; 20:1 follows the date with the verb בא ("came"), appropriate to the visit of the elders, instead of היה ("was") that is used in the other passages which relate the coming of the divine message. But 29:1 begins abruptly with בשנה העשירית ("in the tenth year"), not, as the others, ויהי ב" שנה ("and it was in the —— year"). Slight as is this variant, it has some force as indicating another hand at work on the editing of Ezekiel's prophecies. To be weighed more seriously is the peculiarity of 24:1; it reverses the normal order of the introduction, putting announcement of the revelation before the date, ויהי דבר יהוה אלי בשנה התשיעית" ("And the word of the Lord came to me in the ninth year [in the tenth month, on the tenth of the month, saying"]). In the discussion of this chapter it was pointed out that much of verse 2 is evidently spurious, and the sequence should lead direct from its opening בןאדם ("son of man") into verse 3. Along with the uniqueness of the phraseology of the dating, this becomes cogent evidence of heavy glossing at this point. Further, we pointed out that the very accuracy of the date is a strong count against it, for everyone knew the day, month, and year of the fatal attack on Jerusalem. There can be little doubt that this oracle was dated not by Ezekiel but by some later student of his work. But, then, the entire case for the others is called in question. Their major claim has been that they are correct; but in reality this has little weight, if any. Since they have meaning for us, they would have had still more for our predecessors of twenty centuries ago (or more) in the study of the Book of Ezekiel.

And now the problem confronts us from another direction. Why should Ezekiel have dated only fourteen of his oracles; strictly, only twelve, since we must disregard 1:2 and 40:1? Among the remaining forty-three a large number present themselves as equally deserving this identification. But when such meager total shrinks steadily until we have only six, or at most seven, whose dates can on any reasonable basis be ascribed to Ezekiel, the whole situation becomes highly dubious. Fully half the dates are clearly spurious; what cogent basis is there for granting special consideration to the other half? With two of these latter we have just now dealt. The dates of the anti-Egyptian oracles not already dismissed account for three others--29:1, 29:17, and 30:20. Probably they are correct; and, if so, they are of high value as fixing the time of Hophra's intervention, which otherwise we can place only vaguely some time during the siege of Jerusalem. But there is no apparent reason why they are not to be adjudged the notation of some editor, or editors, who rightly identified the references in these passages and supplied dates from private sources of information. And then the list will have shrunk so far that we shall demand very clear evidence before ascribing so small a group to Ezekiel, even if the apparent nucleus should be augmented by one or two. Finally, the wording of 20:1 is slightly different but yet so far uniform with the group as to carry implication of a common origin.

So we come to the astonishing result that the only date to be considered seriously[1] is that one which stands completely apart in its era of reference, that is, 1:1. And its one claim is that it is different. But then the situation commented on a moment ago becomes still more acute. Is there only one genuine date in the entire book? Would Ezekiel have given one date and no more? The uniqueness of the theme in this passage, the revolutionary nature of the incident for his own life, may very well have led the prophet to mention the precise day when this profound experience came to him,[2] while neglecting to date

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[1] In the Biblical Archaeologist, V (December, 1942), 54, W. F. Albright returns to the question of the authenticity of Ezekiel and of its dates, which he had discussed in Journal of Biblical Literature, LI (1932), 93 ff. The occasion for this is Weidner's publication of the tablets found in the vaulted building near the Ishtar Gate of Babylon. In these there is mention of "Yaukin, king of the land of Yahud," among

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a motley group of individuals who had received sesame oil and barley from the Babylonian stores. From this Albright works through to a conclusion that "this system of dating (*sc*. by the years of Jehoiachin's captivity) is thus one which could scarcely have been invented centuries afterwards; it is a striking confirmation of the genuineness of Ezekiel's prophecies." Surely a *striking* result! And consideration of Albright's intervening argument reduces but slightly the sense of a very long jump in his logic. Indeed, he seems here to have fallen foul of the besetting temptation of the archeologist to draw large conclusions from most meager objective evidence. The opinion about the dates is of no value. Why must we be shut up to the alternatives that either they are genuine or else the system was "invented centuries afterwards"? On the contrary, it is most plausible that the Jews in Babylonia should continue until "centuries afterwards" to date from the event that had brought them there.

The brief note in II Kings 25:27 is important in this connection. It demonstrates that the Jews were actually employing this dating from Jehoiachin's captivity at some time subsequent to the period of Ezekiel. And two striking parallels to this usage are available, both of which were "invented centuries afterward." Maimonides dates his *Introduction to the Mishnah-Talmud* in "the eighth year after eleven hundred years from the destruction of the Temple" (obviously Herod's temple); and the Karaite Jews in the Crimea employed three eras, one of which was "of our captivity" (that is, so it is believed, from the fall of Samaria). The "genuineness of Ezekiel's prophecies" is a much too complex matter to be dismissed with Albright's facile comments in the two articles cited. For the Karaite dates see Chwolson, *Achtzen hebräische Grabinschriften aus* der Krim ("Mémoires de l'Académie impériale des sciences de St. Petersbourg," VII^{e} sér., Tome IX, No. 7 [St. Petersburg, 1865]), see inscriptions 1, 2, 9, 12; Neubauer, *Beiträge und Dokumente zur Geschichte des Karäertums und der karäischen Literatur* (Leipzig, 1866), pp. 29 ff.; De Vogüé *Mélanges d'archéologie orientale* (Paris, 1863), pp. 172 ff.

[2] So Bewer, "The Text of Ezekiel 1:1-3," *AJSL*, L (1934), 96-101.

subsequent occasions of his revelation and activity. But that is as far as we can go. There is no authenticating evidence that can be invoked. The conclusion is possible but no more.

There is so little further to be said that one hesitates to raise again the question of the "thirtieth year." Unquestionably, the incident under this date is Ezekiel's prophetic "call." Further, we shall see that the time of this is soon after 600 B.C. Any relevance to a generally recognized era is then out of the question. Nor can the perplexity be lightened by recourse to textual emendation; there is not a particle of evidence for this, but all the suggestions that have been offered are arbitrary conjectures. We must accept the present reading as in all probability original. So the one possible solution that remains would seem to be that the date refers to Ezekiel's age. A serious objection is that no other prophet's work is so introduced. But if the very tentative conclusion offered just now may be considered, then perhaps Bewer's argument merits attention. He urges that this passage is unique in that it is a prophet's own dating of his call, which in other books is given by editors. Yet it must be kept clearly in mind that there is no certainty at all for this line of thought. It is possible but not at all demonstrated that this date was provided by Ezekiel himself. It may be editorial, like all the rest, notwithstanding it is unique in its authorship. But even if spurious, the least objectionable interpretation --and it is eloquent of the situation that no better adjective can be employed--seems to be that "the thirtieth year" is that of Ezekiel's age. However this may be, certainly there is no ground for supporting the textual emendations advocated by Bewer and others to read "my thirtieth year" or "the thirtieth year of my life." All this is devoid of a single fragment of evidence. Though the postulated change is slight, the proceedure is identical in genius with the worst excesses of Old Testament criticism, which have sought to conform the text to the critic's exegetical theory.

II

THE CRITERIA

Now we may undertake an organization of the results of the entire study. Obviously, a first task will be that of a summary statement and examination of the criteria employed, for it is apparent that the discovery of these has been an essential element in the inductive process.

Basic in the investigation has been the fact that in some chapters of the Book of Ezekiel the difference between genuine and spurious is objectively evidenced by the existence of false commentary. Fortunately, this difference is clear in chapter 15, but in lesser degree it continued through several subsequent sections of our study, thus providing opportunity for some little familiarity with these two types of material and of developing other criteria, before at length this lead failed.

Typical of the genuine oracles, almost to the point of tedium, is the introductory formula ויהי דבר יהוה אלי לאמר ("And the word of the Lord came to me saying"). This is varied in the dated oracles to read, in general, "And it was in (such and such year, month, and day) came (היה) the word of the Lord to me saying." Our study of the dates leads us to recognize that this is in most, if not all, cases an editorial alteration of an original normal formula. On this basis we find that the standard formula is employed to introduce every genuine utterance in the book except 4:1 ff., 6:11-12, 13:17 f., and 33:10-11 and 30-32. Whatever the reasons for these omissions, it suffices for our purpose that they are exceptions to a preponderant rule. On the other hand, the only passages with this formula that we found reason to question are 28:21, 30:1, and 35:1, in all of which the only grounds for skepticism were the slight and insignificant nature of the content of the alleged oracle. But it will be realized that this is quite insufficient, especially since the passages give the impression of being but fragmentary remains of their originals. With such qualification, then, it may be said that this introductory formula is an unfailing mark of the presence of a genuine oracle. On the other hand, the absence of the formula from the five passages noted may be due to faulty preservation. But, in any case, the usage is so normal as to constitute unquestionably Ezekiel's own introduction to his utterances, his account of the experience, whatever it may have been, by which he became conscious of his prophetic messages.[1]

An important observation in regard to this standard introductory formula is that, though simple and brief, and also so common as to impress the reader, yet with the minor uncertainties just now mentioned it was never employed spuriously. In other words, no commentator sought to authenticate his remarks with this phrase. The words בןאדם ("son of man") developed some favor among the later writers in the book and, as is well known, had an important history outside it. Other descriptions of mystic experience such as the coming of the divine hand upon a person or the leading of the Spirit, when once introduced by an expander, attained some little vogue. But for some reason Ezekiel's own phrase remained inviolate. It may be that the expanders recognized faithfully their role as commentators and hence avoided the prophet's formula lest they should seem to claim an inspiration equal with his.

The use of the standard formula is various. Frequently it leads direct into the oracle; but not uncommonly there intervenes a more or less extended explanation of the occasion for the projected utterance. Illustrations are

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[1] It is tempting to speculate that the use of this formula is one more mark of the influence of Jeremiah on Ezekiel. With the former it is frequent but by no means uniform; but for Ezekiel it became the mold in which his religious thinking was cast. It occurs in Jeremiah 1:4,11,13; 2:1; 13:3,8; 16:1; 24:4. Also closely related phrases are found in 1:2; 28:12; 29:30; 32:6,26; 33:1,19,23; 34:12; 35:12; 36:27; 39:15; 43:8; 46:1; 47:1; 49:34; elsewhere, Isa. 38:4. However, these are not "genuine" and hence may in turn be due to an influence of Ezekiel upon the editors.

6:1-3 and 24:1-3; the latter of these, though expanded by some glossator or commentator, yet shows clearly an original instruction to do something and then deliver the oracle. Now it is at this point that a second introductory formula comes into consideration, for regularly and normally there appears here the phrase that is so well known from other prophetic books as to be commonly associated with all prophetic inspiration and authority. In these complex introductions Ezekiel comes presently to say, "and you shall say, Thus says the Lord" (ואמרת כה אמר יהוה). It is important, then, to realize that, notwithstanding the regularity of the standard formula, this prophetic introduction also is genuine in the Book of Ezekiel. But enough has been said to make clear that its genuine use is not by any means so frequent as the other.

But there arises at this point one of the apparent confusions in our critical data, for the commentators are very fond of making the same claim "Thus says the Lord" for their remarks. Not alone so, but this feature raises also one of the large issues of the criticism of Ezekiel, since in the other prophetic books this recurring phrase commonly indicates the beginnings of separate oracles. T. H. Robinson has well pointed out that the utterances of the prophets are normally marked off by the introductory and concluding formulas, "Thus says the Lord" and "The oracle of the Lord" (נאם יהוה).[2] Why should it not be so in the Book of Ezekiel likewise? Further this feature of the prophetic books merges over easily into the threefold division of prophetic literature to which reference was made above,[3] oracles in first person and in third and prose accounts of the prophetic activity. It may well seem that more serious consideration should have been given to the possibility of this in the Book of Ezekiel also and that for lack of it the results claimed are so far invalid. But both matters are quickly disposed of. As a matter of fact, this division of prophetic literature, sound as it is in other books, has little relevance to the Book of Ezekiel. This is another aspect of its uniqueness in the Old Testament. A moment's consideration suffices to make this apparent. The book as a whole purports to be Ezekiel's in an intimate and personal way that surpasses all others. The theory favored by an earlier generation of critics, that Ezekiel himself arranged and edited his own book and left it for all subsequent generations in essentially the form in which we now possess it, fallacious as recent study recognizes it to be, yet is at least true to the ostensible character of the book. It is primarily in first person. Even the long spurious section, chapters 40-48, continues the fiction which previous commentators had tolerated or enhanced, that all is Ezekiel's own account of his experiences, subjective and objective. There are in the entire book only two exceptions to this uniformity, the brief note in chapter 1, verse 3 (or vss. 2-3), and the comment on Ezekiel's prophetic character in 24:24, a passage that cries out to high heaven its spurious origin.[4] Certain comments by the people on the prophet's conduct or utterances are recorded in a number of passages, but they are all related by Ezekiel himself and hence retain the prevalent first-person form. To all intents and purposes then, we may say that the Book of Ezekiel is entirely of the single "first-person" class of prophetic material, which is but another way of saying what was remarked a moment ago, that this sort of analysis is devoid of meaning for the criticism of this book.

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[2] "The Structure of the Book of Jeremiah," Expositor, XX (1920), 21.

[3] P. 71. See Robinson, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

But, then, why not accept all passages beginning "Thus says the Lord" as genuine oracles? Apart from the fact that no such blanket rule of criticism would be tolerated in other prophetic books, there are three features of the Book of Ezekiel that compel, instead, a discriminating evaluation of the claims of each of these passages. First is the fact of differing literary relations of this phrase. We have mentioned that in many passages it occurs as a sequel to and development of Ezekiel's standard introductory formula, but in a far greater number of cases it is inserted sporadically as a convenient beginning for some addition or explanation. Obviously, these latter are of a different genius from the former, and the results of our study have indicated that they are also of a different origin. But the complexity of the problem of Ezekiel, such as to defy solution by any rule of thumb, however excellent, reveals itself here as elsewhere, for in several oracles the introduction is imperfectly preserved. In some cases where the available evidence indicates the presence of a genuine oracle, the sequence from the standard formula into the secondary introduction, "Thus says the Lord," is harsh. A notable instance is chapter 26, where verses 2-6 intervene between the two formulas. And, to add to the confusion, when the second does at length appear, it is preceded by the highly suspicious particle כי ("for"). When one concedes the break in original sequence here claimed, the presence of this word becomes intelligible as an editor's effort to restore some unity to the passage; but nonetheless it is a confusing fact for criticism.

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[4] For a contrary opinion see Bewer, AJSL, L (1934), 100.

The second of the facts compelling rejection of many passages introduced by "Thus says the Lord" is that frequently this phrase is preceded by לכן ("therefore"). This is not in itself a damning accusation; we advance no theory that a prophet, specifically *this* prophet, never used this word. Rather by inductive methods it has become evident that in fact Ezekiel never did write, "Therefore thus says the Lord." At this point, then, we have the good fortune to secure an objective criterion--but an imperfect one, for while this phrase is an almost unfailing mark of spuriousness,[5] yet a large number of indubitably spurious occurrences of "Thus says the Lord" are not introduced by "therefore." But once again careful discrimination is demanded. Ezekiel did employ the particle לכן, though not very often. But he follows it directly with an imperative of the verb "to say,"[6] not with כה ("thus") and a perfect, as in the spurious passages. But the commentators have not shown here the fine reserve evident in their attitude toward the standard introduction, for they have taken over this usage in two, or perhaps three, cases[7] and as well have twice employed the verb דבר ("speak") in a similar construction.[8]

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[5] לכן occurs in a genuine context in 29:19, but LXX omits, except A and Q, which are frequently harmonized to MT. Also it appears in the genuine passage 30:22, but the text is in confusion, and it seems probable that the particle was inserted by an editor to give an appearance of logical sequence to the present conflate reading.

The third reason for refusing to accept the phrase "Thus says the Lord" as a mark of genuine utterance is that the context of a very large number of its occurrences is certainly spurious. Commonly it introduces false commentary; and, before this line of evidence failed our investigation, other criteria had been built up that carried the same implication for this phrase. In brief, this introduction cannot be accepted as the index of a genuine oracle, for the excellent reason that large numbers of passages of which it is an integral part reveal by their features and content that they are spurious.

One of the important results of our study has been the discovery that along with its immense bulk of spurious, and at times false, commentary on Ezekiel's oracles, the book contains also a significant body of genuine explanations--Ezekiel's own rejoinder to questions or attitudes of his contemporaries relevant to his teaching. True to the bent of his mind, these, like the oracles proper, are marked by brevity and a light touch. Indeed, the prophet's taciturnity on these occasions is such that we may consider he did not so much explain his oracles as merely announce their theme. It is as though he sought to dismiss his inquisitors somewhat gruffly. Illustrations are 12:10-11 and 17:12. In the former he curtly mentions that the oracle is about Jerusalem and its coming captivity; in 17:12 he omits any mention of an important element in his oracle, merely remarking that it portrayed the deportation of the king (i.e., Jehoiachin) and his princes.

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[6] Such are 12:23,28; 14:6; and 33:25; and also, with imperative of the verb "to prophesy," in 11:4.

[7] In 11:17 (perhaps also vs. 16, though versional and manuscript evidence throws doubt on the originality of the imperative verb) and 20:30.

[8] In 14:4 and 20:27.

It is as introductory to these explanations that the imperatives just now mentioned commonly occur,[9] although normally without preceding particle. But this construction caught the fancy of the commentators and glossators, for they made large use of it.[10] In addition, the imperative of the verb אמר ("say") is employed in the introduction of the oracle proper in three passages.[11] Apparently this phenomenon is to be regarded as related to genuine instructions elsewhere to "set your face against" someone "and prophesy" rather than suppose that the original formula is defective.

This latter phrase ("set your face and prophesy") may be classed along with the standard introduction as a genuine formula that is never copied by the commentators.[12] Unfortunately, one may not say as much, however, for the bare command to prophesy, which occurs in four genuine passages[13] but in eleven spurious ones.[14] Apparently it was for some reason a favorite with the commentators. But it is commonly helpful to realize that they added freely their own phrases and words as well. The particle יען ("because") either alone or in combination with אשר ("that"), and particularly in the sequence יען——לכן is always spurious. The conjunction כי ("for, when, if, that, because") is used sparingly by Ezekiel but becomes very common in the additions, especially familiar in the phrases כי כה אמר יהוה ("for thus says the Lord") and וידעת (וידעתם or וידעו) כי אני יהוה ("and you, or they, shall know that I am the Lord"). In view of the frequency of the word לכן ("therefore"), occurring so commonly as to be a notable stylistic feature of the Book of Ezekiel, it is to be remarked that the parallel preposition על־כן ("therefore") is extremely rare. However, in one passage, Ezek. 31:5, it appears to have been employed by Ezekiel himself, in so far as the very difficult criticism of this chapter will permit us to judge.

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[9] In 11:5; 12:10; 17:12; 24:21; and 33:10,11. But, as well, the verb דבר ("speak") occurs, apparently in genuine usage, in 12:23; 20:3; and 37:19. It is of interest to note that in 21:12 an explanation is introduced with waw and the perfect of the verb.

[10] In 12:11; 13:11; 17:9; 21:14; 33:12; 36:22; 39:17; and with דבר in 3:1; 29:3; 33:2.

[11] 22:24; 28:2; 31:2.

[12] It occurs in 6:2; 13:17; 21:2,7; 25:2; 28:21; 9:2; 35:2; 38:2.

[13] 11:4; 13:2; 21:14; 34:2.

[14] 21:19,33; 34:2; 36:1,3,6; 37:4,9,12; 38:14; 39:1. It is perhaps worth mentioning that the command "to set the face" (without the addition, "to prophesy") occurs in 44:5, where obviously it is spurious.

The same confused situation holds in the content of the oracles. Much of Ezekiel's phraseology is copied by the commentators; the excess that is unique is of minor proportion. He employs not infrequently the words תועבה ("abomination") and גלולים ("hateful idols"), which then become highly characteristic of the spurious additions. However, פגול ("disgusting thing") belongs to the commentators alone. Further, the oracle in 6:1-5 has cultic terms of the sort the commentators loved, במה ("high place"), מזבח ("altar"), and חמן ("incense altar"). Here, too, is found the word שמם ("be desolate"), which in one form or another is a high favorite in spurious passages. Elsewhere Ezekiel used the derived word ("desolation"),[15] but he never employs שממה or שמה, which are frequent in the commentaries. It is particularly worthy of mention that the phrase which is familiar to every reader of the Book of Ezekiel, even to the point of tedium, "you (or they) shall know that I am the Lord," is always and totally spurious. And, having discovered this, it is of value to adduce its use outside the Book of Ezekiel. In particular it is a typical phrase of the Priestly document of the Hexateuch.[16] Evidently it is a deposit of a religious mood of the Jews throughout much of the post-Exilic period. Beginning apparently not later than the fifth century, it continued for a considerable time.

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[15] 4:16 and 12:19.

[16] Cf. Harford, Since Wellhausen, pp. 32-33.

Ezekiel's most common term for his own people is בית ישראל ("House of Israel"); emphasis on this point is important in view of the certain conclusion that his work was done primarily in Jerusalem. Harford's view is unquestionably correct that by this phrase the prophet had reference not to the Northern Kingdom of Israel but purely to Judah.[17] When he spoke of North Israel, as in 37:15 ff., he never left his meaning in doubt. And for Israel as a whole, north and south, he used בני ישראל ("sons of Israel").[18] On the other hand, this latter phrase is used very commonly by the commentators for their compatriots, evidently Jews. But they are of catholic taste, for they employ still more frequently Ezekiel's בית ישראל. The same situation holds in regard to בני עמך ("sons of your people"); it was used twice by the prophet[19] but then was copied in the spurious additions. More simply Ezekiel speaks of "the people" (העם) in 24:18,19; of "the people of the land" (עם הארץ) in two passages, 7:27 and 12:9 (apparently meaning, as already suggested, the peasantry who were serving as common soldiers in the defense of Jerusalem); of "Israel" in 13:4; of "the inhabitants of Jerusalem" in 11:15; and of "the inhabitants of the land" in 7:2 ff. All these except the last had spurious usage as well.

This cursory summary will serve the purpose of stating the complex nature of the critical problem of Ezekiel. Indeed, the overlap of genuine and spurious features may well give the impression that in the end any conclusion is but a matter of subjective judgment, which in the history of Old Testament criticism has too often usurped the place of sound reason. But by this time the fact scarcely calls for emphasis that there exist real criteria which can be uncovered by an inductive process. They have given results that not infrequently stand out with clarity. But no attempt is made to claim more than the evidence will in fairness support. It would be an absurdity to imply that now everything is known. On the contrary, in almost every oracle in the book there remains some measure of uncertainty. Fortunately, in a large number of these the doubt is of minor proportion and significance. But, equally, many passages permit no more than a probable solution. This is especially true of the great "solid" chapters such as 16, 18, and 20, where the meager residue admitted as genuine in the large bulk of the chapters may at once seem to condemn the entire method. But not so; rather these chapters stand apart in the success with which the commentators have obscured the line between spurious and genuine. That large bulks of spurious material are present does not admit of question, but available criteria do not reveal with the clarity of other passages the point at which one ends and the other begins.

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[17] J. B. Harford, *Studies in the Book of Ezekiel* (1935), pp. 77-101.

[18] 37:21. The phrase appears also in the accepted text of 2:3, but LXX evidences an original בית ("house of").

[19] 33:20 and 37:18; also the feminine occurs in 13:17.

In the effort to give formal statement to the distinguishing features of the work of Ezekiel, on the one hand, and of the several commentators, on the other, one is thrown back on the sane observations of Kessler.[20] No formulation of guides and criteria can ever provide ultimate rules for the dissection of a literary work. However excellent, they can do no more than provide direction for the critic's investigations. His final judgment, in so far as it is to be valid, must depend on his familiarity with details of thought and expression of the author under study. There is a large area of investigation that cannot be covered by rules but only by the critic's knowledge of his writer's idiosyncrasies. The soundness of his results is determined by the adequacy of this knowledge and the delicacy of critical discrimination manifest in its application.

With this reservation the following is offered as a formulation of the more obvious criteria that have revealed themselves as the investigation has moved on from the known to the unknown.

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[20] Cf. p. 17 above.

The Book of Ezekiel manifests a distinctive use of certain formulas and words, and a preference for others, as pointed out just now. The latter feature can do no more than establish certain probabilities, but when augmenting other evidence it may provide valuable support for a critical case. A very important matter is the distinction of the mental types of Ezekiel and the commentators, a difference the more apparent because of the notable uniformity of his literary methods and type of thinking. The other prophets were literary men of a wide repertoire, but Ezekiel is to be likened to Alexander Pope in the sameness of his style. He is characteristically crisp, allusive, and light in his touch. Commonly he merely sketches a situation without comment or judgment, though his presentation is so careful as generally to leave no doubt of his meaning and application. In a few passages, however, he is explicit as to the sins and shortcomings of his contemporaries and the punishment that is to come. The commentaries likewise are generally very brief, suggestive of the style of discussion in the Midrash Rabba; still, by contrast with Ezekiel's finished oracles, they appear discursive. In a few cases, notably in the "solid chapters" mentioned a moment ago, they are of considerable bulk, but strangely the charge of discursiveness is then less fitting. Their normal method is to seize upon a phrase in the oracle or in a following comment and homilize on or apply it. Commonly such remarks are prefaced with the formula "Thus says the Lord," sometimes then followed by the particle כאשר ("according as") and a citation of the word or phrase to be discussed. In a loose way, one may say, there can be sensed, between the genuine and the commentary, that difference which separates original work from copyists' imitations; but obviously this is too vague to apply as a criterion without grave danger of subjectivity.

One of the prime elements in the style criterion is that of metrical form, especially valuable as it is in its indication of the limits of the oracles. This feature was deduced from our first detailed study, that of chapter 15. But, with every effort to avoid subjectivity and to follow as strictly as possible an inductive method, in the end it resulted that all the oracles of Ezekiel are in poetic form. The famous prose passages of the book, the valley of dry bones, the development of the theme of individuality, the mystic visit to Jerusalem, and the like, we were compelled by the force of evolving criteria to adjudge all alike spurious. And the genuine prose reduced itself to brief introductory statements, sometimes no more than the standard formula, but again expanded with instructions or a historical note such as the mention of the visit of the elders. There is nothing in the original Ezekiel to parallel the lengthy prose narratives found in other prophetic books, notably the Book of Jeremiah. But two remarks are in order. Anyone who knows even the superficial facts of the Book of Ezekiel will recognize that it is very different from the others. And in view of the brevity of the poetic oracles, the scantiness of the original prose is not at all remarkable. But, important as are these features for critical discrimination, they do not provide a simple rule for the isolation of Ezekiel's utterances. Identification of the poetic original is frequently beset with difficulty, owing to the state of the text. Further, there is a small but significant body of spurious poetry. The genuine, both prose and poetry, is not infrequently expanded with secondary notes. At every point the critic of this book is confronted with an inescapable demand for careful discrimination and balancing of diverse evidence.

A further matter of great importance has been the recognition of what we may call the larger features of the successive chapters. Sometimes these have nothing immediately to do with the genuine material, but they reveal facts which are of immense significance in the detection of that material. On this basis they become criteria of analysis. First of these discoveries was that of the existence of false commentary, the importance of which need not again be emphasized. But, before this resource was exhausted, the significance of omissions by LXX, in particular those of papyrus No. 967, became manifest. This provided a basis for recognition of some very late elements in the book. Valuable throughout, and crucially important at certain points, is the commentators' testimony to the original text through their citations of it. Double or multiple recension of considerable parts of oracles is a very valuable critical feature. Obviously it enriches our resources for recovery of the original text; but, not less important, recognition of its existence offers the clue to many a perplexing problem of analysis. Discovery that in chapter 33 the introductory formula and oracle are separated by a lengthy intrusion of commentators' remarks gave a useful clue for the solution of the riddle of several chapters, notably 1-3 and 8-11. A number of chapters examined midway in our study deal exclusively or in the main with a single topic, "solid chapters" we have called them. The evidence indicated that each of them had only a single, brief genuine oracle at their beginning; the rest was made up of a compilation of comments, in some cases without and in some with but sparing use of the typical commentators' introductions. To some extent these proved the most difficult part of the entire problem; or, put another way, in them results seem least conclusive. But the grouping of these chapters together, and thus the indication that they do form a distinct class in the criticism of the book, greatly strengthens the results claimed. Later in the study the introductory sequence יען——לכן ("because....therefore") became characteristic of the commentaries. And at length our course brought us to the "spirit" and "hand of the Lord" passages, where again establishment of features as genuine or spurious provided grounds for advance into further passages in which results have hitherto been highly contentious.

From this it will finally be apparent that the seeming erratic order of study of the chapters of the book was not a matter of arbitrary choice but was dictated by results inductively determined. Some minor details of that order are inconsequential, but in its large outlines it is essential to the unraveling of the tangled problem of Ezekiel. Only as criteria are built up in some such way as followed in this study and now thus hastily sketched does one possess the indispensable facts on which to base any sound conclusion in the criticism of the book. It was pointed out already and will merit repetition that the crucial weakness of all criticism of the Book of Ezekiel has been that it started at the obvious point of commencement, chapter 1, which, however, is the very point where one must not begin if he is sincere in the quest of basic critical facts. Chapter 1 belongs critically where we have placed it, near the end of the study but still preceding chapters 8-11 and 37, which, in turn, cannot be understood except in the light of facts uncovered in the criticism of chapters 1-3. Attempted earlier in the process of criticism of the book, or for any reason lacking the facts which the inductive process gradually lays bare, a solution of the problem of these chapters can be--and has been--nothing but more or less astute guessing. One of the important inductive results of our study has been discovery of the correct order in which to investigate the Book of Ezekiel.

III

THE RESULTS

It has been freely pointed out at numerous points in our discussion that the results attained are all open to question of greater or less seriousness--no critical result is ever "proven." But now for the sake of tabulation we ignore such doubts and accept all alike the conclusions presented, whatever their differences of certitude.

There are in the entire Book of Ezekiel 1,273 verses; of these, 1,013 are in the first thirty-nine chapters. Of these again, 251 are genuine in whole or in part, the proportion of their originality varying from complete genuineness down to a bare remnant of not more than a word or two. But this total does not take account of commentators' citations of original words or phrases (an item which would at least double the number of verses with "genuine" nucleus) except in the case only of 24:9-10, which, while certainly spurious, yet provides the only source from which we can complete the oracle that otherwise breaks off unfinished in verse 5. On this basis the number of verses with original content is approximately one-quarter the total of the first thirty-nine chapters. But in view of the spurious elements in many of them it is better to say that the material which we possess from the prophet Ezekiel constitutes rather less than 25 per cent of the bulk of the first thirty-nine chapters of his book.

This genuine material is disposed in fifty-five passages, some of which are composite; that is, they have in addition to the original oracle some expression of attitude by Ezekiel's contemporaries and his rejoinder. Thus they may contain two or even three poetic elements. It will be recognized, then, that the number fifty-five does not correspond to the total of Ezekiel's "poems." Also it must be noted that two cases of duplication exist--4:16-17 is but another recension of 12:17-19, and 3:16*b*-19 is practically identical with 33:1,7-9. And so the total of oracles, including oracles and rejoinders, reduces to fifty-three. In the following list an effort is made to indicate the coherence of original passages, which in our present text are sometimes scattered through considerable spurious additions, by the use of a slant line to separate them from one another. The genuine material of Ezekiel, then, is found in these passages:

> 1:3; 2:3-5,7; 3:11; /3:16-19; /4:1-2,9-11; 5:1-3; /4:16-17; /6:1-5; /6:11-12; /7:1-10,12-21,24,26-27; /8:1; 11:2-6; /11:14-16; /12:1-11; /12:17-19; /12:21-23; /12:26-28; /13:1-5; /13:17-19; /14:1-3,6; /14:12-13; /15:1-5; /16:1-3; /17:1-8,12; /18:1-4; /20:1-3; /21:1-3,5; /21:6-8; /21:11-12; /21:13-22; /21:23-25; /22:1-4; /22:17-18; /22:23-24; /23:1-3,5,11; /24:1-5, 9-10; /24:15-16,18-22; /25:1-4; /26:1-2,7; /27:1-3, 25-27; /28:1-4; /28:11-14,17; /28:20-22; /29:1-3; /29:17-19; /30:1,6,10; /30:20-24; /31:1-8; /32:1-2; /32:17-21; /33:1,7-9; /33:10-11; /33:23-24,27; /33:30-32; /34:1-2; /35:1-3; /36:16-18; /37:15-18,21-22; /38:1-4.

A moment's examination of this tabulation will reveal the fact that only chapters 9, 10, 19, and 39 are completely spurious. And, indeed, in a sense it is true that of chapter 19 alone may this charge be justly made, for the three others are all in some way expansions of, or related to, genuine material; but chapter 19 is completely independent of Ezekiel's utterances. By converse, this makes clear the important fact that the genuine oracles are scattered through practically the entirety of the first thirty-nine chapters of the book. They form, as it were, the skeleton of the present book. But the grouping, nonetheless, is very uneven, as was inevitable in the way the book was built up. Chapter 7 stands first in regard to proportion of genuine material; of its twenty-seven verses, twenty-three are in some measure genuine, though it must be recalled that verses 1-10 and 12 are made up of a multiple recension of a single distich triad. Chapter 12 deserves mention also; it has twenty genuine verses out of its total of twenty-eight; chapter 21 has nineteen out of thirty-seven; chapter 24, fifteen out of twenty-seven; and chapter 28, fourteen out of twenty-six. At the other extreme are chapters 1 and 8, each with only part of a single verse genuine; chapter 16 has only three out of its total of sixty-three; chapter 20, three out of thirty-four; chapter 21, three out of thirty-seven; chapter 23, five out of forty-nine; chapter 26, three out of twenty-one; and chapter 36, three out of thirty-eight.

An analysis of poetic forms gives the following results. There are twenty-one utterances that consist of a single line. The following are of one distich line: 2:4; 2:5 (repeated in 3:11); 11:3; 11:6; 12:10-11; 12:18; 12:19; 12:22; 12:23 (with two such lines); 22:18; 22:24; 28:22; 33:10; and 35:3. The remaining six are each of one tristich line; they are: 17:12; 18:4; 24:21-22; 34:2; 36:16-18; and 38:4. Twenty-three passages consist of a single distich couplet (they are classed as distichs, although in some cases a line is 2:2:2 but then balancing one of 3:3). They are: 12:3-6; 12:7; 12:27; 14:3; 14:6; 16:3; 20:3; 21:3; 21:5; 21:8; 21:24-25; 24:16; 25:4; 26:7; 28:2-3; 29:3; 29:19; 30:24; 32:2; 32:18-21; 33:11; 33:24; and 37:16. On the other hand, there is but one passage of a single couplet of tristich lines; it is 13:4-5, and its measure is 2:2:2, hence in reality its lines are but the equivalent of 3:3 distichs. Passages of two couplets of distichs are: 6:3-5; 6:11-12; 17:3-8; 21:14-22; 23:2-11; 24:3-10; 27:3,25-27; and 37:21-22--a total of eight. Similar tristich formation is lacking. There is but one passage of three distich couplets, though, indeed, it is short by one stichos; that is 3:17-19, which is repeated in 33:7-9. More famous in critical discussions is the one extant poem of three couplets of tristich lines; it is the well-known oracle in chapters 4-5. This exhausts the classes of tristich structure, as also the couplet formation of distichs. But there are a considerable number of distich triads. Oracles of a single triad are 11:14-15; 14:13; 22:2-4; 33:27; and 33:30,32. Two triads make up the poem in 15:2-5; that in 31:2-8 is of four; and chapter 7 contains clearly six and apparently the fragments of a seventh. This tedious tabulation will accentuate the fact several times mentioned that Ezekiel's utterances are brief. The couplet is his favorite poetic form, twenty-three such occur; but the single line, of two or three members, runs a close second in his repertoire; he has twenty-one. There are in the entire book only two genuine poems that attain any considerable length; they are 31:2-8 and chapter 7, the latter easily leading.

Comparison of these results with those of Hölscher will naturally suggest themselves. It will be recalled that he accepted as genuine less than a hundred and seventy verses, in whole or in part. So our conclusions are over eighty verses, or about 50 per cent, more generous than his! However, this is slight occasion for complacency. It will do little to mollify those who are shocked by the severity of Hölscher's findings: a mere sop of eighty verses in a section of a thousand is a bagatelle. Nor is there here any thought of offering them as appeasement. The comparison establishes its own mathematical fact and nothing more. It possesses neither virtue nor vice that we have found 251 verses with genuine material, but only objective fact. The opinion already offered will bear repetition--that the radicalism or familiarity of a critical result is primarily a matter of complete indifference. True, when established, it will be of high importance for independent studies, such as history or biblical theology; but its credibility is to be assessed not by any of these but only by the adequacy of the criteria employed and the soundness of the method followed. The history of modern thought has abundantly demonstrated that inherited dogmas of whatever sort demand fearless criticism, undeterred by a possible stigma of drastic action. The religious outlook of today is profoundly indebted to the biblical scholars of the last two centuries, almost, who followed without hesitation the leading of truth to results that shattered and horrified contemporary complacency. Since current views as to the history and structure of the Book of Ezekiel have been broad-based in the ample ground of our common shortcomings, none may complain if advancing knowledge compels us to conclusions "drastically" remote from the orthodoxy of our "times of ignorance," which, in the quaint phrase of the King James Version, "God winked at."

Still it may be urged in support of the charge that any given result is too drastic that considerations of general probability enter in, and these are always a valid aspect of one's evidence. Yet such are in grave danger of slipping over into pure subjectivism, as each critic in turn applies what he considers to be probable; they have validity only as checked against known facts of the literary and historical circumstances of the body of writing under discussion. And, when this literature is the Old Testament or any part of it, who is to say what are these circumstances? For its composition is freely conceded to cover a period from an indeterminate early date down almost to Christian times, and its preservation in this latter direction merges into a period where we know next to nothing of the history of the text. One of the important results of our study, though unforeseen, has been its discovery of information on just this point; we shall have occasion to return to it again before all is said. Briefly, Old Testament scholarship is compelled to employ the inductive method for precisely this question of general probabilities in the criticism of the Book of Ezekiel. And there are two supplementary lines of approach to this and to the validity of our results, both of which have been employed already in our study; but both now call for a closer integration with our findings. They look in two directions, corresponding to the two facets of our critical conclusions. On the one hand, the position here developed is conservative; it claims, as against the considerable group of brilliant scholars who hold for a late dating, that the Book of Ezekiel really is of Ezekiel: it contains and originated in valid utterances of the prophet of the sixth century B.C. On the other hand, it parts with those who maintain that our book is in major bulk the work of this prophet and that such spurious material as it contains originated within the two or three centuries subsequent to Ezekiel's career. These two aspects call for a fresh consideration of the arguments of Zunz and his successors in Ezekiel criticism down to Torrey and for a further exploration of the significance of the Septuagint for the history of the Hebrew text of the Book of Ezekiel. We turn to them in this order.

Zunz's position was set forth, it will be recalled, primarily in his *Gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden* (pp. 157-62) in 1832, but then amplified with a few further considerations in an article, "Bibelkritisches," in the *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* of 1873 (pp. 676-81). In those intervening forty years his views had advanced from the modest heresy that "Ezekiel and his vision stand nearer to the Persian time than is commonly believed" to the conviction that in the light of evidence presented it cannot be held strange that Ezekiel and his book are later than other prophetic books and must be put in the time of the *sopherim* (*hat man ja in dem Sopherischem Zeitalter dasselbe gänzlich beseitigen wollen*" [p. 681]). Apparently his matured view was that all his adduced evidence should be related to this latter conclusion. In the *Vorträge* he offers as evidence a series of linguistic peculiarities: the book has unusual forms and expressions; a large number of rare words of which many seem to have been created by the prophet himself; there are many Aramaisms and many parallels to Jeremiah's oracles; a number of expressions are related to some in Job or yet later works even down to the latest epoch; a few suggest New Hebrew usage; finally, there is a very notable use of Pentateuchal words and expressions. The list totals 421. But for our purpose it will be well to omit the 8 parallels to Jeremiah, since they cannot have critical significance. The same is true of the JE material in the Pentateuch as well as the Deuteronomic. But since he does not list by documentary sources--how could he at that date?--we single out now only the parallels with the Book of Deuteronomy, of which he has 11. Deducting these 19, we have a total of 402 with which to reckon. Of these, just 27 occur in the passages that our investigation has attribute to Ezekiel; and of these, again, the parallels in Genesis are all from the JE source. So, finally, there are of Zunz's lis only 24 that concern us; the great bulk of his accumulated facts are from the spurious additions that are pyramided in the Book of Ezekiel, one on another, down to a very late time. But a little detail renders the result still more striking. Of Aramaic forms, the genuine Ezekiel has none. Of Zunz's list of 21 forms suggestive of New Hebrew, Ezekiel has none; of the 25 parallels with "latest literature," none are genuine; of such with late literature there are only the phrases בןאדם ("son of man"), עמד בפרץ ("stand in the breach" [13:5]), and נגיד ("leader" [28:2]), the latter of which may actually be spurious; however, none of these have any critical significance. Further, of his "peculiar expressions," only הרי ישראל ("mountains of Israel") and אדמת ישראל ("ground of Israel") are genuine. His class of "rare words" provides by all odds the longest relevant list; 13 out of his total of 133 come from the genuine Ezekiel, but they include such words as צרב ("scorch" [21:3]), אח ("alas" [6:11]), טירה ("encampment" [25:4]), חתית ("Hittite" [16:3]), and יניקות ("twigs" [17:4]). Whatever may be thought of Zunz's argument as a whole, these at least do not seriously impress one as outweighing the evidence already adduced that the passages in which they occur are the work of the sixth-century Ezekiel. But in any case, Zunz's considerations relate in overwhelming measure to material in the Book of Ezekiel which, in complete independence of his views, we have relegated to a date later than the prophet.

The argument in his article in the ZDMG is of similar purport. He points out that the account of the blindness of Zedekiah (12:22-23) is not prophecy but history; 17:22-23 refers to Zerubbabel; chapter 34 is later than Jer. 23:1-8; the regulations in 40-48 are unknown until the time of Ezra; mention of the Garden of Eden, of Noah, and of the Persians evidences a late date. The phrases אדמת ישראל ("ground of Israel"), גלולים ("hateful idols"), תועבות ("abominations"), ויהי דבר יהוה אלי לאמר ("and the word of the Lord came to me saying"), and כה אמר יהוה ("thus says the Lord") are frequent in Ezekiel, but יהוה צבאות ("Lord of Hosts"), which is common in the other prophetic books, does not occur.

Seinecke's argument, while less detailed than Zunz's, yet covers in wide scope relevant features of the book.[1] He points out that the measurements of the Temple reveal a late post-Exilic date, that Zedekiah's coming to Babylon is not prophecy but history, and that chapter 1 has numerous references to other prophets, notably Daniel. A date after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes is likewise indicated by the Gog oracle and by the hatred of Edom expressed in several chapters. Some passages are allegorical; many are dependent on Isaiah and Jeremiah; some are intrinsically incredible. After much of this sort, Seinecke appends a list of fifteen unusual linguistic features that for his thinking also point to a late date. But the striking fact in all this discussion, running to nineteen pages, only two of his cited passages are from the genuine Ezekiel. They are 6:11, which he believes to be like a Greek chorus, and 12:5,7 (the breaking through the wall), which, according to Seinecke, raises problems for credibility and ultimately, is but a recension of Jeremiah's oracle of the girdle (Jeremiah, chap. 13). Whatever one may think of the validity of these comments, at least the objective fact is notable that, of Seinecke's entire argument, only a most meager and minor element relates to what we have found to be the genuine Ezekiel.

Winckler's case will delay us but briefly. He bases his conclusions in large measure on the dates in the Book of Ezekiel, which he holds, refer to the liberation of Jehoiachin in 562 B.C., not to the beginning of the captivity in 597. However, his argument from chapters 17, 24, 29, and 30 comes within our interests, for, as we should expect, he uses genuine and spurious indiscriminately. In part here, too, he bases his conclusions on the dates, but in the latter chapters he urges also that the threats against Pharaoh would be irrelevant in the period of the siege of Jerusalem. Clearly his entire discussion has little meaning for our question.

In Burrows' study of the literary relationships of Ezekiel we need not concern ourselves with Part I, since contacts with pre-Exilic literature are not of significance for the present problem. Part II takes up the topic, naturally, as it concerns the several bodies of alleged post-Exilic literature. In Deuteronomy he finds only two passages that relate to our genuine Ezekiel: Deut. 32:25 lists "sword, pestilence and famine," as does Ezek. 7:15; and Deut. 32:41 uses the verb ברק ("flash"), for which the only parallels are in Ezek. 21:15,20, and 34.

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[1] L. Seinecke, Geschichte des Volkes Israel (1884), II, 1-20.

But the results in the other bodies of literature are even more striking. In the Books of Kings, Burrows finds only a single parallel that concerns us; Ezek. 24:1 and 4:2 seem related to II Kings 25:1, but he grants freely that the latter may be dependent on Ezekiel. There are sixty-eight passages of Ezekiel that appear related to the Law of Holiness, but only four of them come within the limits of the genuine Ezekiel. In Isaiah, chapters 40-55, there are none; likewise all the other late passages of Isaiah are a blank for our present purpose except 24-27, which contain two that Burrows considers uncertain. Zechariah, Malachi, Obadiah, Job, Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah, all alike yield none. The entire Psalter gives only two, and Burrows himself is dubious of one of them. The same result appears in Zechariah, chapters 9-14. Late passages in Jeremiah yield three parallels; Burrows questions two of them, and the third is the proverb about sour grapes and children's teeth that occurs in Ezek. 18:2 and Jer. 31:29. The entire Priestly document (apart from the Law of Holiness) to which Burrows devotes twenty-two pages, provides just six parallels--strictly five, since Ezek. 3:18 and 33:8 are duplicates. One of these Burrows doubts; another is the single word נוצה ("plumage" [17:3]); others are the phrases, "the end has come" (7:2 ff.), "require the blood" (3:18; 33:8), and the use of the Niphal of כבד ("be heavy") spoken of the Lord.

And that ends it! The few parallels that actually come into consideration are eloquent of the real situation. Burrows' "literary relations" are not with Ezekiel at all.

Much of Torrey's argument is irrelevant to the present problem. His interpretation of the treatment that the ancient Jewish scholars gave the Book of Ezekiel, his argument that Ezekiel's audience was in Palestine, and much else, whatever its merit, clearly lies outside the inquiry whether Torrey argues from the genuine Ezekiel or from the spurious additions. And such of his treatment as does relate to this lends itself to tabulation less readily than the studies of Zunz and Burrows. However, in his discussion of the success of Josiah's reform, not a single genuine passage of Ezekiel comes into consideration. The argument that the dates in the book all referred originally to the reign of Manasseh invokes only 22:2 and 7:4,9, and 21 of the genuine Ezekiel. The case for history rather than prophecy in the book brings in only 33:23-29 and 24:15-18 and chapters 4-7, 17, 25, and 35. In regard to the first of these, we concede freely that it relates history, as indeed it purports to do; but the genuine part of it does not bring the history beyond Ezekiel's middle career. The second need not evidence a knowledge of the death of Ezekiel's wife, as Torrey claims, but only the realization that her case was hopeless. And large blanket assignments of whole chapters simply confuse the issue. Examination of Torrey's discussion indicates, however, that he has in mind the spurious sections of these chapters. The case for the lateness of the language of Ezekiel concerns us only to the extent of the absence of the interrogative particle from 15:5, which is said to suggest Aramaic usage. Dependence on Isaiah, chapter 14, it is claimed, is evident in 31:3-18 and 32:17-32 and on Daniel in 31:5.

The bearing of all this line of criticism on the results attained by our study will already have become apparent; it is the more cogent when one realizes that these results were reached in complete independence. While the nature of the arguments and the conclusions of these men have long been familiar, no effort was made to relate them to the investigation. On the contrary, the clues that the book provides were followed for their own worth, and only now at the conclusion of the study have these other arguments been collated.

We find that a small percentage of the evidence adduced falls within what we have adjudged genuine. The validity of the use made of these passages is a relevant question but need not be pursued. In some cases it is highly dubious. But, equally, it may be that in others these scholars have shown the true situation. It may be that at some points we have been too generous with Ezekiel (through a preference to err, if necessary, on the side of conservatism) and so have accepted phrases which in reality are but late and trite intrusions. However, the meager bulk of all this in the total of their arguments serves to emphasize the notable fact that in preponderant measure their conclusions relate to the spurious additions to the Book of Ezekiel. They have shown, not that Ezekiel is a late writer, but only that a large part of the book that bears his name is late. It was urged already that these have been scholars of recognized standing such that their results may not be lightly dismissed as erratic or drastic; there is some sound element in their criticism. There can be not a doubt that they have uncovered valid evidence. Making full allowance for an excessive zeal that has in cases adduced meanings which will not stand and for hasty judgment that reasoned in the mass instead of analyzing evidence with discrimination, it yet remains that the solid core of their results may not be treated otherwise than with respect. We shall but repeat their mistakes if in turn we condemn them _in toto_ because we see much with which we cannot agree. Their unanimity is cogent and welcome support of our own independent conclusion that three-fourths of the bulk of the first thirty-nine chapters of the Book of Ezekiel, and all of the remaining nine, came into being subsequent to the time of the prophet. It would appear that such a result is not at all "drastic" but only an honest handling of evidence that has long been known. On the other hand, the nucleus of the book is largely untouched by their arguments; its validity as the genuine work of Ezekiel is unimpaired.

The relation of the evidence of the Greek translations to our investigation is a topic by no means introduced now for the first; instead it has been constantly in mind and commonly invoked in the wrestle with problems of text and analysis. In particular the novel readings of papyrus No. 967 have been welcomed and at places assigned high importance. But engrossment with this priceless manuscript may well obscure the fundamental fact, freely recognized since Ewald[2] and Hitzig,[3] and familiar to every worker in the problems of the Book of Ezekiel since the notable study of Cornill[4] that our more familiar septuagintal sources diverge notably from the Hebrew text of the book. However, Cornill's investigations were not limited to the Greek translations, but he invoked all versional evidence in an effort to purify the text. That the critic must always do so is a mere platitude of Old Testament scholarship. But, nonetheless, the Greek versions are our primary concern just now, and that for two reasons: the daughter-versions have only ancillary importance, and the origins of the others, at least of such recensions of them as we possess, are too late to have relevance for the problem in hand at the moment. But the Septuagint is in a position of peculiar advantage, since it came into being well within the period which we have alleged for the growth of the Book of Ezekiel; and the other Greek versions arose so soon after that they along with it offer the promise of some sort of information that may serve as a check on our results. An exhaustive examination of this matter is of the scope of an independent study. No more is here proposed than some general sampling and survey in an effort to secure some basis for estimating what bearing this mass of evidence has upon our study, if any.

It will be helpful by way of approach to turn first to a similar problem in a related area. My colleague, Professor A. T. Olmstead, has generously placed at my disposal the unpublished manuscript of a study he made some time ago of the relation of the Greek versions of the Book of Jeremiah to its Hebrew text. From this I quote at length.

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[2] Heinrich Ewald, Die Propheten des alten Bundes (1841), II, 202-388.

[3] Ferdinand Hitzig, Der Prophet Ezechiel (1847).

[4] C. H. Cornill, Das Buch des Propheten Ezechiel (1886).

Every scholar knows that one-eighth of the Book of Jeremiah, 1 per cent of the entire Hebrew Old Testament, is not found in the earlier form of the Greek translation. It is fully recognized that these omissions can rarely be explained as haplographic. At this late date it would hardly seem necessary to reargue the question as to whether the passages missing in this translation are later than the date of that translation. Turning almost at random to any modern commentary, we find such expressions as "an editor living later than G," "G's copy still lacked this expansion," "an appendix later than G," "an interpolation later than G," "verses added later than G."

But if we admit that these passages are not to be assigned to the Book of Jeremiah because they are not in the Greek, then common sense demands that we accept the converse of the proposition, that these additions are later than the Greek translation, that a study of their vocabulary will give us a part of the vocabulary of the Greek period, that their thoughts will be thoughts common in this late period. And it would seem only common sense that we should utilize these words and phrases and thoughts, admittedly of this late period, to test the words and phrases and thoughts of other passages which the "Higher Critic" has declared to belong to the Maccabaean times. It is also possible that from these passages we may glean some new information as to the thought of a time which is of the utmost importance to the student of Christianity because it immediately preceded, yet from which few indeed have been the dated documents preserved. For these inserted passages can be dated with a fair approach to certainty.

A very brief study of the additions made to the Hebrew text after the time of the Greek translation will show their greater homogeneity as over against the greater portion of the passages which were in the original from which that translation was made. Thanks to the invaluable notes in the margin of the Codex Marchalianus, Codex Q, we can assign these additions to the various later translators, Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, and thus we can secure additional aid toward dating these different groups within even narrower limits. Some of these ascriptions are unsigned, some may be wrong, other witnesses to later translations may differ in minor details, but in general we may take this evidence as accurate.

Let us examine the statistics. In a rough list of essential additions, we find that 12 per cent are common to all three of the later translators, 6 per cent to Aquila and Symmachus, less than 1 per cent to Symmachus and Theodotion, 2 per cent to Symmachus alone. Thus a fifth can be assigned to the earliest period. It is worthy of notice that all these additions are short; they are scribal rather than editorial. Almost another fifth, 18 per cent, are common to Aquila and Theodotion; they average a larger number of words, and they add more to the sense. Of the 5 per cent in Aquila alone, several are quite long, and most are of real importance. The 12 per cent assigned to Theodotion alone gives no adequate idea of their importance, and the same is true of the 15 per cent which are not assigned to any given translator but are merely placed under the asterisk as not being in the Hebrew, and of the 7 per cent on the margin without further attribution. Comparison with those passages assigned to Theodotion makes it a possibility that in these cases his name has been omitted, though other explanations might be offered with equal plausibility. The 10 per cent added in some major manuscripts and the other 10 per cent in the later manuscripts or in the Vulgate are again of scribal nature. This last one-fifth show that the period of addition was nearly ended.

The additions common to the three translators are neither numerous nor important. "Saith Yahweh," "The God of Israel," "the prophet," an added ethnic note or a bit of genealogy, a date or a casual addition, the majority testify merely to scribal carelessness or "improvement." More deliberate seems the reference to Babylon: "Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon" (21:7), "I will send to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon" (25:9), "and they shall serve him and I have given him the beasts of the field also" (28:14), "unto Babylon" (29:4). The use of "my servant" as applied to Nebuchadnezzar is particularly striking.

Other characteristic expressions are "innocent poor" (2:34), "great evil" (16:10), "my people" (23:27), "as it is this day" (25:18; 44:23), "sinned against Yahweh" (50:14), ..."are waxed fat, they shine" (5:28), "they that seek their life" (19:9), "away from my presence" (23:39), "but ye have not hearkened" (25:3), "a desolation" (25:11), "of your dispersions" (25:34).....

Probably of the same date are the passages found only in Aquila and Symmachus, such as: "Art thou not he, O Yahweh, our God?" (14:22), "the children of Israel have provoked me to anger with the work of their hands" (32:30), "they watch as fowlers lie in wait" (5:26). Here we have our first case of an interpolated heading, "The word of Yahweh that came to Jeremiah the prophet, concerning the Philistines, before that Pharaoh smote Gaza" (47:1). Perhaps the annotator had been reading Herodotus, but the passage itself clearly refers to an invasion from the north, that is, of Nebuchadnezzar. Symmachus concurs with Theodotion in "deeds of wickedness" (5:28), and "ye shall be my people and I will be your God" (30:22).

One conclusion stands out clearly. The underlying text of the three translators is essentially that of the older Greek translation. It had often been copied and had its full share of scribal additions, but nothing that was strictly editorial. This original text was preserved almost without change to the time of Symmachus, at the end of the second or even the beginning of the third century A.D. For proof we need only look at the small number of important additions testified to by Symmachus alone: "burnt offerings to Baal" (19:5), "done according to all that he commanded you" (35:18), "therefore know certainly that" (42:22), "they returned not from their evil ways," "the tribe of his inheritance."

Now these phrases can be dated with surprising exactness. The uttermost terminus a quo for any is certainly not earlier than 200 B.C., the very earliest date we could postulate for the translation of any part of Jeremiah; on the other

> hand we know from the preface to Ecclesiasticus that by 132 the prophets were at least in part translated. But there is a further complication; Thackeray has shown that the last half of the Greek Jeremiah was translated by the same man who translated Daniel, in other words, chapters 29-51 in the Greek, equaling 25:15--45:5 and 47:1--49:33 in the Hebrew, had not been translated until after the date of the composition of Daniel, 166 B.C.
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> The additions in the group thus far discussed are found equally distributed through the two parts of the Greek Jeremiah. This would seem to indicate that their common original possessed the two parts already united. As there is some reason to assume that the second Jeremiah circulated separately and since some time must be allowed for the winning of such authority for Daniel that it should be translated into Greek, a date of not much before 100 B.C. must be the *terminus a quo* for many if not all of these additions.
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> An extreme *terminus ad quem* must be the date of Aquila's translation, in the time of Hadrian. But this is too late. For those in the larger group were in the common original of all three translators, and yet in some 5 per cent of passages, some very important, Theodotion did not copy Aquila, and in 18 per cent of cases Symmachus did not copy from Aquila, or the text used by Aquila, though they are in Theodotion. We must therefore allow some time for the divergence of company in the three texts. Taking all these factors into consideration, our extreme limits cannot be more than 150 B.C. and 100 A.D., while more probable limits are 100 B.C. and 50 A.D.

Professor Olmstead proceeds with a lengthy listing and discussion of these late insertions according to their occurrence in the several Greek sources; from this we excerpt only a few examples:

> Interest begins to be seen in the surrounding nations, the children of Ammon are to be brought back, "the heart of the mighty man of Moab at that day shall be as the heart of a woman in her pangs," "all the kings of Arabia" attract the interest of the scribe. The Rechabites "unto this day drink no wine for they obey their father's commandment." Israel shall be brought back "from all the nations whither they have been driven," there is promise of "a remnant of Judah." But the majority of the additions are threats; "the thing that I have given them shall pass away from them,"...."that ye may provoke me to anger with the work of your hands to your own hurt"...."when thou art made desolate"...."evil and pestilence"...."because thou hast spoken rebellion against Yahweh."....

The comments on a few more important additions and the conclusion of the study also demand quotation:

> The most illuminating, as well as the longest of these interpolations is found in 33:14-26. The two families chosen by Yahweh and then rejected may be the Davidic and the Hasmonean,....The royal line had ceased to exist and the

temple offerings also, so that we are after 70 A.D. May we conjecture that the failure of Bar Cochba is the cause of this feeling of intense despondency? The emphasis on the change of name for Jerusalem might refer to the foundation of Aelia Capitolina by Hadrian.

....The additions in Codex Q, but under the asterisk, are somewhat numerous, but rarely of importance. Most impressive are the number of historical additions. When "the king of Shishak shall drink after them," by Athbash this is Babel, but is it not ultimately Rome? Note the late tone of "All nations shall serve him and his son and his son's son until the time of his own land shall come; and then many nations and great kings shall make him their bondman."....

The longest passage on the margin of Q is 51:44-49. Note the apocalyptic tinge. The tidings in one year and then another, the violence in the land, ruler against ruler, the slaughter in the midst of the capital, all remind us of the year of the three emperors. Was this prophecy promulgated while the Jews were in revolt against the successors of Nero?

The best proof is the undesigned coincidence. Often have I remarked that the most difficult passage was in 35:14, where my theory asks that we believe the Rechabites "unto this day drink no wine for they obey their father's commandment." The fact that in this very time we find in neighboring lands inscriptions to "the god Dushara who drinks no wine" barely allowed the possibility of such cult taboos. Casually reading one day the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, I read once more the account of the martyrdom of James, which Eusebius has extracted from Hegesippus, and there I found proof that the annotator was right, the Rechabites did exist until the middle of the first Christian century, for it was a priest, and a son of Rechab who most honorably attempted to prevent the murder of the Just. A theory with such undesigned coincidences has an element of truth.

A comparable study of the Book of Ezekiel would be revealing. The notable addition in chapter 36 evidenced by papyrus No. 967 immediately suggests itself as paralleling these longer, late insertions in Jeremiah. An English text carefully annotated and with the additions underlined as Professor Olmstead has done in the Book of Jeremiah, would at once present the matter vividly and effectively. But, as already remarked, we content ourselves with a lesser role.

The editors of the Scheide papyrus mention, relevant to Origen's asterisked passages, that "some of these were taken from earlier translators. There are 184 such passages listed by Field (....including others from Q listed by Swete) for the text of Ezekiel covered by Sch. A few of these readings, some in variant form, appear in the new text. They are as follows."[5] And then a list of twenty such is given. Waiving the question of the significance of these latter readings in No. 967, it is apparent that there remain 164 passages under the asterisk in "the text of Ezekiel covered by Sch.," i.e. 19:12-39:29, except for certain considerable omissions due to the loss of leaves of the manuscript. A count of passages with the asterisk, as shown in Field's Hexapla, through the rest of chapters 1-39 yields a total of 225, that is, for the entire thirty-nine chapters, 389, or just under an average of 10 per chapter. It is an impressive situation. But the significance is enhanced by the concentration of the asterisks. Chapter 1 has 21 and chapter 8 has 23. Although this ratio is not continued through this section, for chapters 9, 10, and 11 have 9, 11, and 4, respectively, yet these numbers recall the great popularity of these "throne-chariot" chapters.

But one must not lose sight of the fact that these figures do not represent all the additions to the Book of Ezekiel which the Greek translations evidence. The famous passages shown by papyrus No. 967 to be late are not accounted for in this calculation; and also our normal Greek texts, in particular Vaticanus, considerably enlarge the list. Many of the total are of little importance. The word גם ("also") has apparently been frequently inserted in the Hebrew, several times כל ("all") and איש ("man, each") also, and an occasional בית ישראל ("House of Israel"); sometimes a suffix has been appended. Rather more striking are such as these selected for illustration from chapters 20-21:

> 20:8, and I brought them out from the land of Egypt; 20:22, and I will turn back my hand; 20:27, that you may know that I am the Lord; 20:28, their altars....indignation against their offerings, and they set there....21:9, because I will cut off from you righteous and wicked.

Yet none of these is remotely comparable with the great addition, 36:23b-38, to which reference has been so often made. But midway in importance one may place the insertion of 33:25-26. While none show close verbal similarity to the insertions in Jeremiah, yet it is apparent that they are of the same sort, evidence the same type of mind, and arise out of a similar attitude to the Hebrew text. More to the point, however, is the fact, doubtless already observed, that the late additions to Jeremiah are in some cases intimately related to the material in the Book of Ezekiel which we have found reason to ascribe to the commentators. It is valuable corroboration but does not in itself necessarily imply that the latter are to be dated in the period 100 B.C. to 50 A.D. but only that they evidence a late vogue of thought and expression that persisted to these latter dates. However, in regard to the differences of Hebrew from Greek, we need but defer to standard critical works, replete as they are with instructions to "delete with LXX" or the like.

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[5] A. C. Johnson, H. S. Gehman, and E. H. Kase, The John H. Scheide Biblical Papyri: Ezekiel (1938), 38 f.

But once again to lean upon Professor Olmstead's discussion, the converse of this, though so obvious, has scarcely been adequately appraised. If all this various material is to be omitted as not in the Hebrew at the time of the Greek translations, then it is patent that the Hebrew text was in process of expansion and development down to some subsequent date. As to how late that may have been, we can do no better than cite once more an opinion of the editors of the Scheide papyrus, which in a gratifying way corroborates Professor Olmstead's calculation. They repudiate the common view that the prologue to Sirach evidences the existence of the Greek translation of the prophets by 132 B.C., for "as a matter of fact there is no direct evidence of a Greek version of Ezekiel before the end of the first century [A.D.]" In the end they can only accept the belief of Swete (Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek, p. 26) that "the Greek text of Ezekiel had assuredly found its way to Egypt before 1 A.D.". And, as for the Greek of 36:24-39, Kase is cordial to Thackeray's view that it is the version of Theodotion.[6]

The convergence of these lines of evidence is cogent for our present purpose. The Book of Ezekiel was receiving notable accretions right to the dawn of the present era, if not still later. The long process of homilizing commentary with which we have been steadily confronted in the course of this study continued through the obscure period of the history of the Old Testament text and right out into the clear light of attestation by the Greek translations.

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[6] Johnson, Gehman, and Kase, op. cit., p. 10.

These two types of subsidiary testimony with which we have been occupied for some time, however cursorily they have been presented, corroborate the conclusion, whether or not "drastic," that the Book of Ezekiel is the product of many centuries' activity. But, indeed, this position is not at all to be considered drastic. Instead, it is highly constructive. It serves to set the separate passages of the book in an intelligible framework and so evolve out of the incoherent jumble of inconsequential reiterations a rational scheme of relevance and meaning for living men through all that little-known period. When we see that its redundancies are not mere banality or stupid blundering but the devout comments of unknown Jews from the lands of their widespread scatterings, the book becomes a precious legacy of vital piety, recording for those who can read it aright the struggles and triumphs of faith of men who braved their stern and bitter lot sustained by the help they found in that earlier Book of Ezekiel, which already had become for them the word of God.

IV

THE HISTORY OF THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

Contrary to the view commonly held in an earlier day of Ezekiel studies, the present organization of the book cannot be the work of the prophet himself. Although a nucleus of the Books of Isaiah and Jeremiah came into existence during the careers of these prophets and in the case of the latter, at least, under his direction, yet we have no knowledge of any such action on the part of Ezekiel. The lack of chronological sequence in the present book, even if not worse than in those of the other two great prophets, is cogent evidence against it; but, indeed, this consideration is balanced by the difficulty of finding *any* rational scheme in the present book, though obviously it is the work of somebody. It seems probable, however, that certain earlier collections lie back of the Book of Ezekiel that we possess, and it is a free guess, but nothing better than a guess, that the prophet may have had something to do with these. The grouping of the oracles against Tyre and against Egypt may be vestiges of such early collections; the genuine material is so brief, however, that if they existed at all, they must have been meager pamphlets. More significant is the existence in our present book of duplicate oracles, as already mentioned: 3:17-19 (= 33:7-9) and 4:16-18 (= 12:18-19 It is difficult to believe that any editor would have permitted this if he were making an original collection from independent fragments. As in the case of repetitions in the Psalter, the duplication must originate in different collections employed by a later editor. Unfortunately, the lines of demarcation of these pristine Books of Ezekiel are completely obscured. Obviously, if we were to make a division somewhere between chapters 4 and 12, we would thus separate the repetitions, but such a method would be too clumsy to pass as criticism. Not less cogent is the fact of conflate recensions of a considerable number of oracles: chapter 7, verses 1-12, will be recalled as a notable example. Since this is more than mere glossing, instead the demarcation of the several recensions is at times somewhat clear, the feature can be regarded only as another aspect of duplication; but here the editor recognized the original identity of the two (or three?) copies and combined them. Such passages are commonly in bad preservation, clearly indicating that these recensions existed independently for some considerable time. So along this line we come to a superficial agreement with Kraetschmar's famous theory--very superficial, however, for a distinction of first and third persons does not come into consideration; the genuine Ezekiel is all first person. Still more important, there is not a scrap of evidence that Ezekiel himself had anything to do with this double publication of his works. On the contrary, general probabilities would point in the direction of a single original from which these recensions diverged, probably by geographic separation.

That process of commenting on the book which was responsible for the greater part of its bulk may well have begun even before the collection of the oracles was complete. For we saw that 36:7-12 was written some time before the work of Nehemiah and that verses 1-6 arose still earlier in this first period of Jewish scattering. The vivid consciousness of the desolation of the land shows that these writers lived in Palestine. In that fact we seem to discern the clue to the unique development that was to produce the Book of Ezekiel. Clearly they knew Ezekiel's minatory oracle against the hills of Palestine as sites of pagan worship (6:1-5); with visible evidence of its fulfilment ever before them through the dreary years of the Exilic period, the hope naturally arose for a bounteous restoration to balance the age-old ruin. It may well have been an extension of this attitude that gave us the entire bulk of late comments in this book. While all the prophetic books were worked over in religious mood and edited with application to contemporary needs, yet in particular Ezekiel, who lived through and discharged his ministry during the last tragic years of the kingdom, who witnessed the siege and sack of Jerusalem, then went a captive to Babylonia, seemed to stand close to the nation in its continuing travail. And his words stimulated thought and guided action as Judaism emerged out of the trials of the dispersion.

The Babylonian editing of the book, famous in recent critical discussions, is a reality, though its share in the final result is much less than is commonly supposed. It certainly includes the work of more than one man; the spurious material in chapters 1-3, probably rightly attributed to this source, is composite. There is nothing to show when this was produced. It is tempting to date it during the Exile, but actually there is no conclusive reason why it should not be as late as the third century, as Torrey holds on different grounds. It is a fair presumption that these editors were Babylonian Jews, although the *faux pas* of allowing a year and a half (or even only six months, as some sources read) for the journey to Babylonia (33:21) prompts the suspicion that this individual was a cloistered Jew of Palestine.

However, if the "Babylonian editor" was in Babylonia, then it is a plausible guess that the spurious anti-Egyptian material was written by Jews of Alexandria. The tantalizing possibilities of allusions here and there to phases of Ptolemaic history would bear this out. But how far may this go? Were the anti-Phoenician additions made by Jews in Syria? We should recoil from the assumption that those against Ammon and Edom were written in these lands. However, one passage rather clearly reveals its origin outside Palestine; this is 37:12-13. Along with whatever validity may inhere in the preceding speculations, it gives one a brief glimpse of an aspect of the history of the book that unfortunately is too fleeting for more than a question. How were these annotations from foreign lands preserved? How were they finally assembled in the hands of the Palestinian scholars--if we are safe in supposing the final editing was done there? It is not unreasonable to postulate for this period some sort of embryonic beginning of the great Jewish schools of Babylonia and Alexandria, to become so famous in a later era; did each develop its own Book of Ezekiel with diverse recensions and with independent commentary?[1] And in the free intercourse during Macedonian times were these carried to Palestine to enrich the speculations of the scholars there?

The brief passage 38:4b-6 appears to have been added soon after the time of Darius Hystapsis, as also 30:5. From some time long subsequent to Nehemiah comes 38:7-9. And then there are large numbers of additions during the Diaspora and still later in the Diaspora....and so on to the famous section, 36:23b-38, apparently the latest considerable addition to the book and to be dated somewhere about the beginning of the present era. A fruitful source for the study of this long process is provided by chapters 4-5. Apparently, commentary began while the three strophes of the oracle were yet united, and the earliest exposition related to the entire poem and was appended at its close, that is, after our present 5:2. If the present order of the chapters indicates the sequence of its development, as evidence elsewhere would lead us to believe, then the "expanders" were first with their work, adding 4:3,12 and 5:3-4. Somewhat late in the process the independent oracle 4:16-18 was intruded between the second and third strophes, some editor evidently believing that he had thus found its logical and chronological position. Similarly the first and second strophes were separated by the alleged oracle of the length of the Exile, 4:4-8. The late date of both these insertions is evidenced by the fact that they are ignored by the commentators. Midway in the development, the interpretation of the siege rations as unclean came into the passage. But before that the "cataloguer" had done his work on 4:9, providing the mingled grains now present. This ritual uncleanness seems re-echoed in 5:11, and then the commentary runs on to the end, this idea interwoven with that of the three fates, for which the suggestion was found in the third strophe of the poem.

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[1] W. Emery Barnes argues ("The Scene of Ezekiel's Ministry and Audience," Journal of Theological Studies, XXXV [1934], 164) that "often a particular turn of language is entirely suitable if the words were spoken to a community living outside Palestine." Most of his evidence is drawn from the commentaries, hence, if valid, has relevance here.

For the rest we can do no more than refer to types of thought and attitudes. Personalities are submerged in all this activity, and presently even time and place fade from thought, and nothing abides but the timeless aspiration of unknown men toward a life of faith and righteousness.

V

THE WORK OF EZEKIEL

Ignoring the ascribed dates of Ezekiel's oracles, most if not all of which are found to be spurious and many undependable, his utterances generally lend themselves on the basis of internal evidence to grouping in an approximately chronological sequence. This evidence was surveyed above in the studies of the separate chapters of the book. In a few cases, notably the anti-Tyrian oracles, the criteria for dating are less than conclusive, and in others they fail completely. In the following organization the former are assigned their most probable position, the latter are set apart by themselves. An effort is made also to relate the oracles to epochal events of the prophet's time. Commonly it is impossible to determine the chronological order within a group; in that case the sequence of chapters is followed, but, if evidence of priority is available, it is employed. For convenience, the oracles are numbered consecutively throughout.

A. Oracles from about 600 B.C.

(Apparently we are to concede that the oracles in chapters 1-3 are the earliest that we possess from Ezekiel. The colorless little utterances in chapters 25 and 35 could very well have preceded, but it is best to bow to tradition. How long those may then have been before these latter, there is nothing to indicate, since the date in 1:1 is impossible to interpret into intelligible chronology. All that can be done is group all these together.)

1. 1:1-3:11

   (And it came to pass in the thirtieth year in the
   fourth month in the fifth day of the month)[1]
   the word of the Lord came to me saying:

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[1] Parentheses are employed to indicate uncertainty as to the original text or a reading based on emendation.

Son of man,
I am sending you
to the House of Israel;
and you shall say to them, Thus says the Lord:
If only they would hear,
if only they would stop!

2. 3:16-19 [= 33:1,7-9]
And the word of the Lord came to me saying:
And you, son of man,
A watchman I have set you for the House of Israel;
when you hear a word from my mouth
? ? ? ? ? ?
and you shall warn them from me.

When I say to the wicked, You shall certainly die,
and you do not speak out to warn him from his [way,
that wicked one shall die for his evil
but his blood from your hand I will require.

And you: when you warn the wicked
and he does not turn from his wicked way,
he shall die for his evil,
but you will have cleared yourself.

3. 25:1-4
And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, set your face against the Sons of Ammon, and prophesy against them; you shall say to the Sons of Ammon, Hear the word of the Lord: Thus says the Lord,
Behold, I am giving you to the Sons of the East,
and they shall pitch their encampments in you;
they shall eat your fruit,
they shall drink your milk.

4. 35:1-3
And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir, and prophesy against it; you shall say to it, Thus says the Lord,
Behold, I am against you, Mount Seir,
and will stretch out my hand over you.

B. Early in the Reign of Zedekiah

5. 17:1-8,12
And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, tell a riddle and speak a parable for the House of Israel; you shall say, Thus says the Lord:
The great eagle!
his wings were wide,
his plumage rich!
He took one of the cedar's tips,
the best of its twigs he plucked off.

And he set it in a fertile field,
by abundant waters he planted it,

to bring forth boughs,
  to grow branches,
  to become a majestic cedar.

....and the word of the Lord came to me saying, Say,
Behold, the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem
  and took its king and its princes
  and brought them to himself to Babylon.

6. 15:1-5

And the word of the Lord came to me saying,
  Son of man,
    How should vine-timber be better
      than any timber from the forest?
    Does one take from it wood
      to use for any purpose,
    or do [men] take from it a peg
      to hang anything thereon?

    See, to the fire
      it is given for fuel!
    Behold, at its best
      it was useful for nothing;
    how much less when fire has burned it, and it is [charred,
      can it yet be used for any purpose!

C. From the Middle Years of Zedekiah's Reign

[Two of these seem relevant to the drought of which we learn from Jeremiah's prophecies; it is convenient to set them down first, though actually we know nothing of the order of any within this considerable period.]

7. 14:12-13

And the word of the Lord came to me saying,
  Son of man,
    When a land sins against me
      doing dishonor,
    I will stretch out my hand over it
      and break its staff of bread,
    and I will send famine into it
      and cut off from it
      both man and beast.

8. 22:23-24

And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, say to her,
    A land unclean are you!
      In a day of wrath no rain has come!

9. 14:1-3,6

Certain men of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me. And the word of the Lord came to me saying,
  Son of man,

These men have brought up
  their idols into their heart,
and temptations to their sins have they set
  right before their faces.

Therefore say to the House of Israel, Thus says
[the Lord,
Turn back and repent
  of your faith in your hateful idols,
and from all your abominations
  turn away your faces.

10. 16:1-3

And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man teach Jerusalem of her abominations; you shall say, Thus says the Lord:

Your origin and your birth
  were of the land of Canaan;
your father was Amorite,
  your mother Hittite.

11. 24:1-3,5,11

And the word of the Lord came to me saying,
  Son of man,
Two women there were,
  daughters of one mother:
Oholah the elder,
  Oholibah her sister;
  and they were mine.

But Oholah went from me in lewdness
  and vented her passion on her lovers;
then Oholibah, her sister, saw
  and gave rein to worse passion than hers.

12. 33:30-32

Son of man, the sons of your people speak of you by the walls and in the doors of the houses; they say one to another,

"Come now, and hear
  What comes from the Lord."
And see! you are to them as a song with pipes,
  of melodious sound:
they listen to your words
  but do them not.

13. 34:1-2

And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say of them, Thus says the Lord:

Woe to the shepherds of Israel
  who are shepherds of themselves!
  Is it not the sheep the shepherds should serve?

D. Later in Zedekiah's Reign but before the Babylonian Invasion

14. 20:1-3 [This is dated 7/5/10, which may carry some dependable reference to the actual circumstances.]

Certain men of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the Lord, and they sat before me. And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel; say to them, Thus says the Lord:

Is it to inquire of me you are coming?
As I live, I will not be inquired of by you!

15. 6:1-5

And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, set your face against the mountains of Israel and prophesy against them; you shall say, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord: Thus says the Lord,

Behold, I am bringing upon you a sword
  and I will destroy your high places.
Your altars shall be desolate
  and your incense altars broken.

And I will throw down your slain
  before your hateful idols
and will scatter your bones
  round about your altars.

E. At the Approach of the Babylonians

16. 21:1-3,5

And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, set your face toward the Southland and prophesy against the woodland in the Negeb; you shall say to the woodland in the Negeb, Hear the word of the Lord: Thus says the Lord,

Behold, I am about to kindle fire in you,
  and it will consume in you every green tree.
The flame you cannot quench,
  but all faces will be burned by it,
  from south to north.

But I said, Ah, Lord, they say of me, Is he not one who speaks in parables?

17. 21:6-8

And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, set your face against Jerusalem, and prophesy against the land of Israel; say to the land of Israel, Thus says the Lord:

Behold I am against you!
  I will draw my sword from its sheath
and will cut off from you
  both righteous and wicked.

18. 21:11-12
And you, son of man,
Groan with anguished loins
with bitterness groan before them.
And when they say to you, Why are you groaning?
you shall say,
Because of what was rumored; for it has come!

19. 21:13-22
And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, prophesy; say, Thus says the Lord:
A sword! A sword! It is sharpened;
it is polished for slaughter!
I have put it in the hand of the killer
to flash like lightning.

Smite hand against hand; strike them down,
O sword of carnage!
Slash with keen edge right and left,
wherever you may turn.

20. 21:23-25
And the word of the Lord came to me saying,
You, son of man,
Set for yourself two ways
for the sword of the king of Babylon to come.
And carve a sign at the fork of the road,
"To Judah and Jerusalem."

21. 22:1-4
And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, will you judge--will you judge the bloody city, and teach it of all its abominations? You shall say, Thus says the Lord:
A city shedding blood within it!
And it has made idols as well.
Of your blood that you have shed you are guilty,
and by your idols that you have made you are unclean.
You have brought close your day;
and your year of doom has arrived!

F. At the Beginning of the Siege

22: 24:1-5, 9-10
And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, mark this day; speak a parable about the House (of Israel); you shall say to them, Thus says the Lord:
Put on the pot!
Pour water in, too;
gather in it ritual flesh,
take shank and shoulder.

Heap high the fuel beneath;
boil bones within.

Take much wood,
  fan the fire,
  boil the flesh!

23. 22:17-18
And the word of the Lord came to me saying,
  Son of man,
    The House of Israel are dross for me.
      I will blow upon them with the fire of my indignation.

G. In the Course of the Siege

24. 4:1-2,9-11; 5:1-3
Son of man,
  Take you a brick,
    map a city on it,
    then lay siege to it.
  Build siege-works against it,
    heap up a mound against it
    and set rams round about.

  Take you barley,
    put it in one vessel
    and make bread for yourself.
  Your food you shall eat by weight,
    twenty shekels a day,
    and water you shall drink by measure.

  Take you a sharp sword,
    pass it over your head and beard,
    and take scales and divide the hair.
  A third you shall burn in the fire,
    a third you shall strike with the sword,
    and a third you shall scatter to the wind.

25: 8:1; 11:2-6
I was sitting in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me, (and the word of the Lord came) to me saying, Son of man, these are the men whose plans have brought evil, whose advice has worked misfortune for this city, and who now say,
  Not at present
    should we build houses.
  It's the pot,
    and we're the flesh.
Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, son of man; say, Thus says the Lord:
  You have slaughtered many in this city
    and filled its streets with slain.

26. 12:17-19 (= 4:16-17)
And the word of the Lord came to me saying,
  Son of man,
    Your bread you shall eat with anxiety,
      and water you shall drink in consternation.

And you shall say to the people of the land,
(Your bread [you] shall eat with fear
and water [you] shall drink in consternation.)

27. 26:1-2,7
And the word of the Lord came to me saying,
Son of man,
Behold, I am bringing against Tyre
Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, from the north,
with horse and chariot and cavalry
and with a great assembled host.

28. 27:1-3,25-27
(And) the word of the Lord came to me saying, You, son of man, raise a lament over Tyre; you shall say,
Tyre, you are a ship
of surpassing beauty;
and you are loaded full, and most majestic
standing far out to sea.

Into high seas they have brought you:
those pilots of yours:
your wealth, your treasure and trade
shall go down in the watery deep.

29. 28:1-4
And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord:
Behold, you are wiser than Daniel;
no mystic secret has baffled you!
By your learning and your cleverness
you have gotten wealth.

30. 28:11-17
And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, raise a lament over the king of Tyre; you shall say of him, Thus says the Lord:
You are a seal of shapely design,
of exquisite beauty:
you are in Eden, the garden of God,
inclosed in a setting of all precious gems.

You are a cherub with wide-spreading wings;
among stones of fire you walk.
Your heart has grown proud in pomp,
your wisdom you have ruined for splendor.

H. At the Time of the Egyptian Intervention

31: 29:1-3
(And) the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and prophesy against him (and against all Egypt); you shall say, Thus says the Lord:
Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh,
king of Egypt:

you great monster
  lying at ease in his Nile.

(And I will put hooks in your jaws
  and will bring you up from the depths of your
      Nile,
with all the fish of your Nile
  sticking in your scales.)

32. 30:1,6,10

And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, prophesy! You shall say, Thus says the Lord:

(. . . . .
And the supporters of Egypt shall fall,
  and her vaunting pride shall come down;
. . . .
And I shall destroy the leaders from Memphis....).

33. 30:20-24

And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man,....Pharaoh, king of Egypt....Thus says the Lord:

Behold I am against Pharaoh, king of Egypt,
  and will break his arms;
but I will strengthen the arms of the king of
      Babylon
  and will give my sword into his hand.

34. 32:1-2

(And) the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, raise a lament over Pharaoh, king of Egypt; you shall say to him,

You thought yourself a lion among the nations,
  but you are like a water monster:
you belch out your snortings,
  you churn up the waters with your feet,
  and rile their streams!

35. 32:17-21

And the word of the Lord came to me saying,
  Son of man,
Wail for the great army of Egypt
  and conduct them down into the nether world!
Among those slain with the sword let them fall;
  let them go down and lie with the uncircumcised.

I. Late in the Siege

36: 6:11-12

Thus says the Lord:

Strike with your hand
  and stamp with your foot
  and say, Alas
for all the abominations
  of the House of Israel.

He who is afar, by pestilence shall die,
and he who is near, by the sword shall fall;
he who is besieged, by famine shall end:
so I will expend my rage upon them.

37. 24:15-16, 18-22

And the word of the Lord came to me saying,
Son of man,
Behold I am taking from you
the delight of your eyes, by disease.
Do not lament;
do not weep,
nor let your tears flow.

(And I spoke to the people in the morning); my wife died in the evening, and I did (in the morning) as I was commanded. Then the people said to me, Won't you tell us how this that you are doing concerns us? So I said to them, The word of the Lord came to me saying, Say to the House of Israel, Thus says the Lord:

Behold I am about to defile my sanctuary,
the desire of your eyes;
then you shall do as I have done.

38. 12:1-11

And the word of the Lord came to me saying,
And you, son of man
Make ready your things!
By day bring them out like an exile's.
In the evening dig through the wall;
Carry them on your shoulder through the gloom.

So I did as I was commanded. I brought out my things by day as an exile's; in the evening I dug through the wall and carried them out through the gloom. Then the word of the Lord came to me in the morning, saying,

Son of man,
Did they not say to you--
the House of Israel--
What are you doing?
Say to them,
This oracle is against Jerusalem:
into exile they shall go.

J. At the End of the Siege

39. 13:1-5

And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, prophesy against the prophets, prophesy and say to them, Hear the word of the Lord: Thus says the Lord,

Woe to those who prophesy out of their own heart!
As jackals among ruins
are your prophets, Israel.
They stood not in the breaches in the Day of the Lord

nor built a wall
for the House of Israel.

40. 7:1-10,12-21,24,26-27
And the word of the Lord came to me saying, And you, son of man, thus says the Lord in regard to the land of Israel:

Now is the day!
the end has come
upon you, inhabitant of the land.
Now will I pour out my wrath on you
and will expend my anger upon you;
just as you have done I will requite to you,
and your abominations shall abide among you!

(The time has arrived!
Let not the buyer be glad
nor the seller be sorry;
for the seller will no more return to his goods
and no man will possess himself of his wealth.
And while they still live . . . . ?
....wrath.....)

Blow ye the trumpet;
make all ready!
but none goes out to battle.
Those in the country die by the sword;
those in the city famine and pestilence devour.
Fugitives slip away,
they are out on the hills--
all of them are killed!

All hands hang limp,
all knees run with water.
They gird on sackcloth,
terror covers them;
on all faces there's dismay,
on all heads baldness.

Their silver they throw out,
their gold is as filth--
though their hunger is not sated
their stomachs not filled--
for gorgeous jewellry they had used it,
and their abominable images they had made with it.

But I give it to foreigners as booty,
to the most wicked of the earth as spoil.
I have brought the scum of the nations:
these shall possess their homes;
I will bring to an end their boasted strength,
and these shall have their holy places in heritage.

Disaster follows hard on disaster,
rumor on rumor ensues!
The prince is clothed in desolation,
and the soldiers are powerless, overwhelmed!

As they have done I will do to them
  and their own practices I will mete out to them.

K. Just after the Fall of the City

41. 11:14-15
And the word of the Lord came to me saying,
  Son of man,
    Your brothers, your brothers, the men exiled with you,
      are they of whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem say,
    Begone from the Lord!
      To us the land is given in possession.

42. 33:23-24,27

And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, the inhabitants of these ruins (in the land of Israel) are saying,

    Abraham was one
      yet he took possession of the land;
    we are many,
      to us the land is given in possession.
Therefore say to them, Thus says the Lord:
  As I live
    Surely those who are in the ruins
      by the sword shall fall;
    whoever is in the country
      I will give to wild beasts;
    and those who are in fastnesses and caves
      by pestilence shall die.

L. Early in the Period after the Destruction of the Kingdom

43. 38:1-4

And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, set your face against Gog, the chief of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him; you shall say, Thus says the Lord:

    Behold, I am against you, Gog,
      chief of Meshech and Tubal;
      and I will turn you back, and all your host.

M. In the Exilic Period but of Uncertain Date

44. 18:1-4

And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Why do you use this proverb (in) Israel,

    The fathers have eaten sour grapes
      and the children's teeth are set on edge?

As I live, declares the Lord, you shall never again use this proverb in Israel

Behold all souls are mine--
father and son alike are mine.
The soul who sins, he shall die.

45. 33:10-11
And you, son of man, say to the House of Israel:
Thus you say,
Our iniquities and our sins have come upon us,
and we pine away in them.
Say to them,
As I live, declares the Lord,
I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked
but in the return of the wicked from his way.
Return! Return from your ways;
why will you die, O House of Israel?

46. 36:16-18
And the word of the Lord came to me saying,
Son of man,
When the House of Israel were living in their land,
they defiled it with their way;
so I poured out my wrath on them.

N. Later in the Exilic Period

47. 37:15-18,21-22
And the word of the Lord came to me saying,
And you son of man,
Take one stick
and write on it "Judah."
And take another stick
and write on it "Joseph."
Then bring them together
so that they are united in your hand.
When the children of your people say to you, Will you not tell us what these things mean for you? say to them, Thus says the Lord,
Behold, I am about to take
the sons of Israel
from among the nations
whither they have gone.

I will gather them from round about,
and will bring them to their own land.
They shall no more be two nations
nor be divided into two kingdoms.

O. Quite Late in Ezekiel's Career

48. 12:21-23
And the word of the Lord came to me saying,
Son of man,
What is this proverb you[2] use

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[2] The word is plural in Hebrew.

against the land of Israel,
saying,
The days lengthen
and every vision fails?
Therefore say to them, Thus says the Lord:
I bring to an end this proverb;
no more shall they use it in Israel.
But speak to them,
The days are near,
and the content of every vision.

49. 29:17-19

(And) the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, performed a great service with his army against Tyre; (every head was made bald and every shoulder was stripped) but he had no wages for his army from Tyre for the service that he performed against it.....Thus says the Lord:

Behold, I am giving to Nebuchadrezzar,
king of Babylon,
the land of Egypt;
and he will carry off its spoil
and take its booty;
and it will be wages for his army.

P. Of Uncertain Date

50. 12:26-28

And the word of the Lord came to me saying,
Son of man,
Behold the House of Israel are saying
the vision which he sees:
it is for distant days;
and for remote times he is prophesying.

51. 13:17-19

And you, son of man, set your face against the daughters of your people who prophesy out of their own hearts; prophesy against them; you shall say, Thus says the Lord:

Woe to those who sew bands
on the joints of every hand,
and make veils
for all sorts of people
to hunt souls:
and they profane me to my people
for handfuls of barley
and bits of bread.

52. 28:20-22

And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, set your face against Sidon; prophesy against it; you shall say, Thus says the Lord:

Behold I am against you, Sidon,
and I will be glorified in your midst.

53. 31:1-8

(And) the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, say (of the king of Egypt and of his army):

Whom (was he) like in greatness
  among the trees of Eden?
Beauteous with boughs
  and lofty in stature,
up among the clouds
  were his topmost branches.

The waters nourished him,
  the deep sustained him
its streams flowing
  round his fertile soil;
so he stood higher
  than all trees of the land.

In his branches nested
  all birds of the heavens;
neath his leaves were born
  all beasts of the field;
in his shadow dwelt
  whole nations of men.

The cedars did not rival him
  in the garden of God;
the cypresses were not like him
  so great were his boughs;
no tree could compare
  with him in his beauty.

VI

EZEKIEL, HIS CAREER AND HIS BOOK

We know nothing of the personal antecedents or early history of the prophet Ezekiel. His literary bequest, while revealing much of his later career, is silent as to his family and upbringing. There is, however, not a particle of evidence that he was of North Israelite origin; this theory in so far as it has gained vogue is dependent on the spurious material in his book—and even then the indications are trifling. On the contrary, it fits all our known facts to believe him a native of Jerusalem, thoroughly at home among its citizenry. The editor to whom we owe the introduction to the book tells us that Ezekiel was a priest, or the son of a priest, Buzi--the Hebrew is ambiguous. It is the habit to bow to such editorial contributions in the other prophetic books, accepting them in default of information by which to check their accuracy. We can do no other here, save offer the caveat that Ezekiel's famed priestly character and interest is a creation of the spurious additions to his book, notably chapters 40-48; his own utterances reveal no greater familiarity with or interest in the cultus than might be postulated of any intelligent Judean of the time. As a matter of fact, his references to it, of any sort, are a very minor proportion of his literary product.

The claim that the date given in 1:1 is a statement of Ezekiel's age at the time of his prophetic call, though possible, is far from convincing. If it possesses any value, this is the only personal information that we have from this time.

The oracle against the Ammonites in chapter 25, since its alleged raison d'être is late commentary, is best related to the incursions by these people into Judah about 600 B.C. The same applies to that against Edom in chapter 35. The evidence, like much in the Book of Ezekiel, is less conclusive than we might wish, but, lacking contrary considerations (as we do), we may believe that by this time Ezekiel had begun to give expression to his convictions. The two utterances are of slight content, as might well befit the earliest ventures of a neophyte prophet. But, further, they may well have preceded his epochal experiences related in chapters 1-3. These unquestionably constitute Ezekiel's "call." But there is no convincing reason why some tentative efforts may not have preceded the profound conviction that he was a messenger sent by the Lord. However, the most that all this implies is some uncertainty as to the date of this experience. It may have been shortly before the events of 600 B.C., but if later cannot have long delayed, for Ezekiel was fully launched in his public career very early in the reign of Zedekiah.

Ezekiel began his work in a period of acute national stress. The bright promise of freedom to live their life and work out their national destiny that sprang to existence with the collapse of Assyria proved for the Judeans but a flickering taper, as the little land soon found itself once more embroiled in the rivalries of imperial power politics. The misguided folly of Jehoiakim called down Babylonian armed interference and the ensuing disaster of 597 B.C. But the futility of Zedekiah was of even more incredible stupidity. His weakness permitted the upstart officials of the state, in egregious self-importance through the deportation of their betters, to lead the little kingdom into a second revolt against Nebuchadrezzar, with the inevitable ruin and obliteration of the kingdom that came in 586 B.C. Thus, through all the first part of his career, Ezekiel lived and worked in a time tense with impending doom. And such alleviation of the despair as may have brightened his subsequent years was but of the grim sort by which only a strong man can live: the worst had happened; life with its stern tasks and its duties might yet promise hope. In these circumstances we are to sense something of the prophet's greatness. Through all that time he held true to his vision of unseen realities. Unmoved by party cries and national bigotries, he went his way, steadily insisting upon values more enduring than the policies of the moment and upon standards by which these must be judged. And, when all seemed lost in the blackest moment of Judah's history, he continued to voice his rebukes in the name of Israel's God, who was final arbiter of the affairs of men and ruler over the destinies of empires.

In all this he had good precept and example. The pre-Exilic prophets all maintained their witness through days of menace. Isaiah in particular had lived through a crisis which on a grander scale foreshadowed the perplexities of Ezekiel's time. But the salient fact to keep in mind was the presence of Jeremiah in Jerusalem with Ezekiel through all this tragic dozen years. He was now a proven prophet, in mid-career, and quite without rival as the significant personality of contemporary Judean life. In force of character and clarity of principles he towered high above the petty time-servers in political life and even the best representatives of Judah's religious thought. By a strange characteristic of most Hebrew prophesy, neither he nor Ezekiel refers in writing to the other, yet their relations must have been close. The younger prophet shows marks of dependence upon his great contemporary; at times one would believe he took the suggestion for his oracles from him. We know nothing of the nature of their collaboration--unfortunately, the personal narrative in Jeremiah's book never mentions his fellow-prophet among his friends and supporters; but the relation between their teaching is such that Ezekiel may often have attended and heard the public delivery of Jeremiah's utterances.

In view of the highly ornate, mystical account of Ezekiel's call given by our present book, it is odd to realize that the original narrative is simple and straightforward even beyond that of Jeremiah's. It was a true "call": merely a sense of mission--the Lord was sending him to speak to the House of Israel. But he realized, as did his great predecessors, the difficult task in store: would they listen? Would they turn back from their wrong ways? A second experience, how long after the other we have no means of knowing, amplified his mission and enforced it with a sense of responsibility. He was as a watchman over a city, upon whose faithfulness and vigilance the lives of all his townsmen depend. If a sudden raid catch him unaware, the ensuing slaughter of unwarned citizens lies upon his guilty conscience. But if he warn the people, then he can do no more; it is for them to act on the truth he has declared. We seem to catch here an echo of the answer that came years before to the youthful Jeremiah, diffident of his responsibilities as a prophet: for him there was only to speak, the Lord watched over his word to perform it. In the sense of his own responsibility for the persons thus divinely put under his care we recognize a trait of Ezekiel's character that was to express itself several times in his utterances and apparently formed the deep motivation in all his work. All the prophets were concerned that their nation might repent and escape its doom, but Ezekiel is the first to express the individual aspect of this. Like the great unknown author of our Book of Jonah, he seems to have been stirred by a feeling of pity and affection for the great, toiling, suffering mass of men who had no claim on the divine compassion, save that they were human--"more than 120,000 persons who know not their right hand from their left"!

The disastrous events of 597 B.C. left Ezekiel silent --at least no utterance from those days is extant. But this need not seem remarkable. Jeremiah, too, had nothing to say at the moment. It may have been that Jehoiachin's capitulation, like that of Leopold in recent times, was so sudden that nothing could be said of it except in retrospect. But it could not have been many months after that Ezekiel undertook to interpret events through his parable of the eagle and the cedar twig (chap. 17), which has come to us in a conflate text badly treated by ancient scribes and commentators. The occasion is notable as providing the first instance of Ezekiel's ministry of comfort, though this was directed toward the exiles, not the remnant in Jerusalem, for his explanation to these was curt and evasive. The incident exemplifies that hidden resource of faith which in blackest moments sees the first promise of dawn. It was a faith and steadiness for which Ezekiel was to have abundant exercise in the years that lay before.

Through Zedekiah's reign Ezekiel's attitude was one of consistent criticism and warning for the people of Jerusalem and for the leaders who refused to read the lesson of the first disaster and were formulating policies certain to entai a worse one. At first, he objected to the shallow, really absurd mood of self-sufficiency and grandiose hopes that, like a similar trend of recent times, was sweeping the nation away from a sense of reality. He pointed out the fact, obvious to any clear observer, that Judah never had been a great power and, now after the humiliation of 597, was further than ever from such possibility. Unfortunately, he went unheeded--the common experience of the prophets--and presently he added to the mere political analysis a religious and moral appraisal. Jerusalem was of mongrel, pagan origin and still manifested its innate character; Judah was younger sister of the land of Samaria, whose vile conduct she even surpassed. The ideas are not unlike the later doctrine of original sin, an interpretation which, however, he was presently to preclude. But Jerusalem too was a city of blood, of mingled profanities like a vile broth of sin; it was a city whose rulers were false shepherds, serving themselves at the expense of their flock. The occasion of the great drought falling somewhere within these years was interpreted, in a mood comparable with Jeremiah's striking ability to see sermons in the common casual things, as a mark of divine judgment: it came because of the people's sin and religious perversity; hence the Lord was breaking the staff of bread. In all this we see Ezekiel as of the true prophetic succession. Here, though briefly sketched, is the same passion for social justice that marked all Israel's seers; here is that objectivity which made of them critics of their day and generation; and here, too, that clarity which scoffed at absurd political hopes, seeing Judah as she was, an insignificant pawn in the rivalries of the great powers; her genius and destiny lay, not in aping their brute ambitions, but in the quiet, humble things of the spirit.

As the years of Zedekiah's reign dragged out their sorry length and the policies of the court drew on toward that doom which every thoughtful man might foresee--though actually few did--Ezekiel's activity intensified. It is a notable fact that almost one-half of his oracles group themselves in the few years from the advance of the Babylonian invaders to the departure of the second group of exiles. He repeatedly warned of the coming disaster. His interpretation of it, however, is not always obvious. In one passage (22:1-4) he relates it to the oppression and paganism rampant in the city. If one looks below the surface of things, it appears that he referred to that self-seeking which spells inevitably the decay of any people and to a lack of social cohesion which ultimately and at the best can come only through lofty religious motivation. But elsewhere he attributes Judah's predicament to bad leadership, which is but another aspect of the same charge; he says that the bad counsel of the ruling classes brought the city to the verge of ruin. Brief as his utterances characteristically were, it is apparent that he had accurately analyzed the evils of his time.

This large group of oracles concern themselves with four main topics. In the total they seem political rather than religious, so little of the latter do they manifestly express, yet only through Ezekiel's basically religious philosophy of life are they to be understood.

At first, his theme is the terror and ruin foreboding in the advance of the Chaldeans. But later he depicts in vivid oracle and symbolic drama the fast-approaching reduction of the city to complete impotence before merciless captors. Latest of these is chapter 7, the longest oracle we have from him. It is a poem of outstanding power. In its descriptive vigor, its ability to seize and transmit a pervasive mood, it ranks high among the best achievements of the Hebrew literary genius; it reveals that Ezekiel's poetic flight, while at times more tawdry than the worst of Wordsworth, could under such terrible stimulus, like his, rise to notable heights. In view of its origin, written as it was not more than a few days before the city's collapse, the poem is a priceless heritage. The terror and paralyzing gloom of those days still cast their spell over the reader. The third type is represented by the oracle against the popular prophets of Judah (13:1-5); which is to be dated about this time. These bore a heavy share of guilt for the nation's ruin. Devoid of vision, serving only their own interests, they did not discharge their high office as leaders of the thought and action of the community. The passage is the obverse of Ezekiel's personal commission as a watchman. Uttered some ten years later, it reveals the constancy of the prophet's concept of, and ideals for, his divinely given work. He was outraged that these ostensible colleagues had no such sense of the dread responsibility of him who is called to stand between a people and its God.

And, finally, within this period too are to be dated the anti-Egyptian oracles, save only the late threat in 29:17-19, and probably some if not all of those against Phoenicia. The former, we have seen, take their rise in the Egyptian alliance and Hophra's ill-starred attempt to succor Jerusalem. The latter, while less clear in their activating circumstances, are presumably to be associated with the siege of Tyre, which Nebuchadrezzar initiated as part of his activity in the west.

Both these latter groups of oracles, along with the slightly later threat to "Gog of Magog," raise the problem of Ezekiel's view of world politics; but, unfortunately, they provide all too little of concrete information. Of his interest in and loyalty to his own people there can be no doubt, though he saw no escape from the predicament into which Zedekiah and his ministers had plunged them but only deeper ruin. His antipathy to Egypt, too, is intelligible on the same basis as Isaiah's--that land's effete pretense to rank as a first-class power. But the crux of the issue is why Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, should look with favor on the Chaldean empire of Babylonia. That he did so is certain; but his reason he never divulges. We may speculate that there was in this a considerable element of political realism, a recognition of the patent fact that Nebuchadrezzar's Babylon was the unrivaled power of the time; this situation Ezekiel may have piously interpreted as ordained of God. But also he seems to have entertained some faith in the benevolence of Babylonian rule. This is a legitimate inference from his oracle on Jehoiachin's captivity (chap. 17). And, if we are correct in our understanding of the Gog oracle, his conviction was not shaken by the rigorous experience of deportation but, instead, was apparently quickened when he came to know Babylonia at first hand. For him, then, subjection to the Chaldeans, however terrible the process, was not the end, was scarcely even disastrous, but instead was the promise that Judah might work out her true destiny freed from the petty chicanery of her own rulers.

Ezekiel experienced with his fellow-citizens the mounting privations and hardships of the protracted siege. Then, after the city fell, he was numbered among the group driven away on the unpitying march to exile in far Babylonia. This seems the best interpretation of the puzzling passage 11:14-16, though, indeed, available evidence is less conclusive than we wish. From the same interval between the fall of the city and the departure of Ezekiel with the exiles comes the similar oracle, 33:23-24,27, which at first reading suggests nothing but unmitigated gloom in this time when all seemed lost. But its denunciation of wasting destruction upon the selfish remnant in Jerusalem carries by implication a suggestion, though very slight, that there were better things in store for the captives.

We are not told whether Ezekiel was counted by the Chaldeans as a common exile or whether, like Jeremiah, his seeming pro-Babylonian stand won him also special treatment, so that thus he went voluntarily to join the Jewish community established in Babylonia eleven years before. But go he did in either case our evidence leads us to believe. Unfortunately, his later oracles do not support this conclusion with unmistakable testimony, though certainly they provide nothing adverse. The most that can be claimed is a certain breadth of outlook that accords better with his being at the heart of the empire than secluded in rural Judah. The oracle against Gog seems to partake of that large world view which was a notable mark of Babylonian life at this time. Also the promise of a restoration and reunion of Joseph and Judah is best understood in (though not demanding) proximity to the remnants of the northern tribes, such as Ezekiel would enjoy in Babylonia.

How long the prophet continued his ministry among the uprooted Jews, as also his circumstances there, we do not know. Considerations were advanced in our study of the passage for accepting the validity, though not the genuineness, of the date in 29:17, which then would apparently be the latest word of his that we possess--it is pleasant to find our results at many points in harmony with age-old tradition. He would then be a man past middle life, indeed beyond sixty years of age if here again we may put any dependence on the theory that 1:1 gives his age at the beginning of his ministry. The hardships endured during the siege twenty-five years earlier and in the arduous journey into exile may well have broken his health, so that the end came before the close of Nebuchadrezzar's reign. But, in any case, this second part of his career appears, in so far as we correctly interpret the none too certain indications for the dating of several oracles, to have been his richest and most rewarding in enduring values. This is what we should expect. By the time of his arrival in Babylonia he was a mature man in mid-career, his religious insights seasoned by stern discipline; and in the relative peace of his Babylonian life he had opportunity to survey in broad objectivity the forces of life and the future of the people with whose leadership he was charged. Of the extent of his activity, as also of the bulk of oracles that have irretrievably disappeared, we have a clear hint in the recorded comment of his contemporaries that his prophecies related only to the distant future (12:26-28). Apparently he was in this period famous for his promises of good, specifically of glowing hopes of a return to Palestine, for he charges that the gloomy words of his companions were spoken against[1] the land of Israel: they put aside his promises in stubborn refusal to believe that anything good could come out of their predicament. Yet of such oracles we have relatively few, though enough to find once more our critical results in harmony with tradition. It has always been held that at 586 B.C. Ezekiel abandoned his gloomy forebodings and became a prophet of hope, with an effective ministry of encouragement.

Most striking of such prophecies is that of the reunion of Judah and Joseph, to which reference was made a moment ago. It is a tribute to his stubborn faith that in days such as these he could boldly assert the restoration of the scattered Israel and its rebuilding into one nation. Of the paralyzing hopelessness of the exiles, which constituted Ezekiel's problem and challenge at this time just as the chauvinistic pride of the people in Jerusalem had at an earlier, we have several notes. Clearly this is the background of the brief oracle in 36:16-18. The people are stunned by God's seeming failure of them, but Ezekiel answers with the thought that had become the orthodoxy of prophecy: the disaster was a judgment of God; it was his retribution for the nation's failure to follow the things that are clean and pure. Again they voice their despair with what may be regarded their doctrine of original sin, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." Or they summarize the situation in their own words, expressive of utmost resignation to hopelessness, "Our iniquities and our sins have come upon us, and we pine away in them." It was in response to this situation that Ezekiel evolved his great doctrine of individualism. It marks a notable advance in his own thinking, for earlier he had given full assent to the traditional belief in national solidarity--for the evils of Jerusalem God would draw his sword and slaughter both righteous and wicked (21:6-9). Ezekiel was not the first man, or the last, to learn through life's bitter vicissitudes and the needs of those he loved that the Lord is merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth. As to how much deep thought and long pondering he gave to the gloom of his fellow-exiles we can only speculate; but, however it came about, he grasped the great truth that all alike are God's people--whether father or son, only the person who commits sin shall die for it. God is a God of grace, who has no pleasure in the death penalty but in forgiveness of a repentant sinner. There is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, Ezekiel seems to say. Here is one of the great achievements of Israel's religious discovery; and, although Ezekiel did not formulate the doctrine de novo, his contribution is such as to justify his inclusion among the great leaders of his people's thought. Its far-reaching importance is obvious. Its meaning for the centuries of the post-Exilic period is attested by the bulk to which commentators expanded his very brief oracle and by the eagernesss with which they seized upon the theme on the slight pretext offered by chapters 14 and 33.

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[1] It would appear the preposition is to be so rendered.

The genuine Ezekiel is so meager in personal detail, especially as contrasted with the rich narrative sources in the Book of Jeremiah, that one may well despair of a glimpse of the prophet's personality. And, indeed, in the end the hard-won result is small. Yet considerable can be gleaned by squeezing his every literary scrap for its last drop of information, in the fashion to which we are compelled in much of our study of the ancient Orient. A notable result that emerges is the basic kindliness, the genuine interest in his fellows, that apparently lay deep in his prophetic motivation. All the prophets were champions of human rights, but by contrast with Ezekiel they seem to have lost the individual in the mass. For Ezekiel, society was composed of so many thousands of persons, each with his hopes and problems and iniquities--and possibilities. Jeremiah, with all his greatness, was austere and remote; he sat alone by reason of the hand of God upon him. But Ezekiel was of the people. To him they resorted freely to discuss the problems and prospects of the day. The elders came, a fact that might lead us to believe that this feature is to be limited to his life among the exiles; but 8:1 and 11:2-6 make clear that they are the leaders of the Jerusalem community. And Ezekiel did not pamper them with soft words. His uniform attitude through those days was denunciatory and menacing; also he treated their rank with scant consideration, bluntly telling them they were so bad that the Lord would not answer them. But still they came. And the common people heard him, with many a searching question. Doubtless much of their interest was in watching his enacted symbols and sharpening their wits with the puzzle of his meaning. In a day when drama was but in its crude beginnings, Ezekiel's pantomimes must have provided the best entertainment available to lighten the gloom of the later years of the kingdom. Indeed, he tells us as much; the people came to listen as to an entertainer, the whole city was agog with his repute. But the success of this lighter appeal obscured for them his serious purpose. With a sense of failure he realized that they heard but did not heed. Again, he differed from Jeremiah, to whom he owed so much, in that he was a married man. And he tasted of the common suffering when his wife died during the siege, apparently a victim of its hardships. Whether they had children we do not know. We may hope there were none; they could but have added to Ezekiel's impotent suffering when he went exiled with hosts of other helpless human chattels under the lash of ruthless captors.

The nature of Ezekiel's religious experience is not clearly stated. His oracular formula, "The word of the Lord came to me," though repeated to the point of tedium, tells little of the spiritual stirring that guided him. Nor are we any wiser when he represents the Lord as speaking with explicit directions, "Say to them, Thus says the Lord." One thing alone is clear; the abnormal psychic phenomena for which he is famous belong not to him at all but are the creation of commentators and editors, who for whatever reason inserted these notes. Some of the phenomena are purely an accident of the final editing of the book, as when he is credited with knowing in far Babylonia the exact day when Nebuchadrezzar made his first assault on Jerusalem (24:1-2). We have no reason whatever to postulate for him other than a normal religious psychology. He was a man of a healthy mind, who tasted life in its normal scope and experiences, and to whom the word of God came in even simpler form than to Jeremiah. The impact of truth upon his whole being--body, mind, and soul--was for him divine revelation.

His religious outlook was of the orthodoxy of Hebrew prophecy. The basic conviction, which he does not even trouble to emphasize, so axiomatic does it seem, is of the reality of God, exalted in righteousness and power. Like all Israel's thinkers, he saw history as the working-out of the divine will. Even the great empires were but tools to serve this far-off purpose. And God's righteousness entailed also judgment, even by fire and sword. Yet still God is truest God in his compassion. That heart-rending, wistful pleading which Ezekiel ascribes to the Lord expresses most deeply his concept of the divine nature:

As I live, declares the Lord,
  I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked
    but in the return of the wicked from his way.
  Return! Return from your ways;
    why will you die, O House of Israel?

Here and in his doctrine of the individual, which arose out of his own deep instincts, we reach the height of Ezekiel's inspiration and of his contribution to our growing thought of God: the Lord is a God of kindness whose tender mercies are over all his works.

The student of the Book of Ezekiel must beware lest engrossment with critical analysis and then the piecing-together of fragmentary information about the prophet and his teaching mislead him insidiously into the error, too familiar in Old Testament criticism, of supposing that with the completion of this task the work on the book is done. It is fruitful for the critic to remind himself steadily, and not least in his study of the Book of Ezekiel, that "spurious" and "worthless" are not equivalent terms. The work of Ezekiel is the heart and center of the book that bears his name; but the whole book is much greater, both in bulk and in significance, than if that were all. When its tangled threads have been unraveled and its tedious and perplexing reiterations set in relation to an intelligent process, it becomes a book of thrilling interest; itself the child of Judaism,[2] and it is beyond price as the deposit and record of that obscure period from the Exile to the beginning of the present era through which Judaism was assuming its distinctive forms. It is the connecting link between the Old Testament and the post-biblical thought of Judaism as expressed in Mishnah, Midrash, and other such literature. Being contemporary with both prophets and rabbis, it spans, in time as also in literary mode and religious thought, the gulf that separates them. It was still growing through the days of several of the latter and not inconceivably may actually contain comments by them in the way they are imbedded in the Pirke Aboth and the Midrash. It throws a flood of light upon the history of the preservation and development of the prophetic books through a period that is otherwise peculiarly obscure and thus provides an invaluable starting-point for the study of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. But for him who can read with imagination the book comes with the incensed atmosphere and vivid coloring of the Orient. Hosts of men in far lands and diverse ages have enriched it with their devout musings and thought. Here is a dreamer of the ghetto who longs for the hills and vales of the land whose memory his fathers have cherished; yonder a persecuted one encouraging himself with thoughts of the day when the Lord will vindicate himself and his people in the eyes of those who have long despised them. Another ponders the age-old question: Why did the Lord permit all this disaster to come upon Israel? A rabbi, it may be, in the embryo academies of Babylonia, perhaps in Babylon itself, rich with memories of the wonder and romance of imperial days long past, or perhaps in one of the still older cities of the great plain, has expounded for his students Ezekiel's denunciation of the false shepherds of Israel; his fervid account of the Great Shepherd has carried him to such heights that his students later jot down on the sacred roll his most lyric passage. We catch a glimpse of a patriarchal figure in round cap and flowing robes, seated in his humble home in the hills of Media--or is it far to the west among the sons of Javan? By the flickering light of a pottery lamp he reads far into the night, pondering the judgments of God that had come upon the recalcitrant fathers of his people. But a brighter moment arrives when he goes on to the symbol of the two sticks and the gracious promise of the Lord that he would gather his people from the nations among whom they were scattered and unite them in one kingdom in their own land: with eager fingers he adds his devout hopes to fill out the happy picture. The scene shifts. And now it is a dapper businessman of Alexandria. His community is becoming dangerously "liberal," shocking the strict Jews who travel down from Judea; and he himself, in his daily dealings with the teeming population of that great capital of finance, affairs, and learning, has drifted into a way of life that would seem pagan to the straitest sect of Jewish religion. But he is a loyal Jew, according to his lights, faithful to synagogue and festivals; he spends the Sabbath in reading the Later Prophets--today it is the Book of Ezekiel; his mind is better skilled in finance than in theology: his comments are not profound, something about the terrible vengeance God will wreak on his foes, and then "they shall know that I am the Lord," a glib phrase copied from some previous commentator. But his words too remain for us to this day.

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[2] Cf. J. M. Powis Smith, The Prophets and Their Times (2d ed., 1941), p. 216.

No one will mistake these fancies for attested fact. But it was some process such as this, but in still greater wealth of variety, that made our Book of Ezekiel. Enough has been said as to the impossibility of identifying individuals in this activity of the centuries; only in a few cases, and then within wide limits, can their times be ascertained; and their location is still more vague. It suffices that many men of diverse mood and ability have made their contribution to this deposit of growing religious experience and thought. All were men of profound faith, convinced that the power of God and the righteousness of God are the ultimate facts of human life.

The spurious matter in the book ranges in bulk and significance from an intruded word or two all the way to lengthy paragraphs--it is too much to say, to nearly complete chapters, for such extensive material is always composite. At the lower extreme the work is little more than scribal glossing; it is the work of expanders, as we have called them. Good examples are the notes on Ezekiel's drama of captivity, in chapter 12, or the information that the gold and silver of the folk of Jerusalem, which Ezekiel said could not buy food for them in the siege, had formerly been used for making idols--a theme that is a sort of obsession for many of these men. A more notable case, which at the same time illustrates the expanders' familiarity with their sacred scriptures, is the listing of precious stones in 28:13, the entire series being quoted from the description of the high priest's breastplate in Exod. 28:17 ff. However, all this is negligible in the total, for most of the added material, while dependent immediately or through earlier commentary upon the oracles of Ezekiel, yet is a real contribution to the thought of the book and at the same time reveals the temper of its writers.

A notable feature is the severity of much of the commentary. It far exceeds the original strictures of Ezekiel in its denunciation of the writers' own people and in threats of impending ruin. Some of these men even stoop to indecency; the revolting filth of 4:12-13 and the disgusting pornography of chapters 16 and 23 are efforts to paint as a solemn warning the utter badness of the Jewish people in a previous age. True, Ezekiel had said things like this; but his worst figures never descended to the vilification in which these others revel. Less bitter, though of a similar temper, are such average passages of denunciation as the additions to chapter 5 and the survey of Hebrew history in chapter 20. A thread that runs through many chapters also we have called that of the "shamed commentator": the idea that Jewish conduct in Palestine had been such as to bring a blush to decent folk. When the nation is removed into exile and thus obtains a certain objectivity on its past, it will remember all this with shame. Now, doubtless, there was basis in fact for such taunts or confessions as they may have been; the pagan cults that revived after their brief eclipse in Josiah's reign and persisted to the destruction of the kingdom had features well deserving the language of the commentators in chapters 16 and 23. Yet this is not the point; rather why should these later writers have emphasized this feature of Judah's past when Ezekiel had done no more than hint at it in his threat against the cultus on the high places and allude to it briefly in the parable of the two lewd sisters? One is prompted to speculate that the evil was a contemporary reality for the commentators; for it is clear that the pagan nature worship was not exterminated by the fall of the state in 586 B.C. And, too, the Jews of the Diaspora doubtless found similar practices rampant, with their sensuous appeal, in the religions with which they came in contact in foreign lands. Yet, on the whole, it is probable that this mood of the commentator was primarily based in history; the nation's past had significant meaning for him and his contemporaries, so that it was important--thus he reasoned--to drag the ancestral skeleton from the obscurity of receding years. Nor are we left in ignorance of the nature of this motivation. Certain passages make clear that the writers, in harmony with their people in general, felt their checkered history to constitute a theological problem: how could it be that the covenanted people of God suffered in the way Israel had done? It was the Jewish wrestle with seeming divine defeat just as later their Christian near-relatives were compelled to an apologetic for the "offense of the Cross." And their answer was already to hand in the great pronouncements of the prophets that in the very crisis of national disaster had portrayed the hand of God stretched out in punishment of a recalcitrant people. The commentators but reinvoked in their own words this thought and drove home to their contemporaries with characteristic vigor and excess the utter badness of their forefathers that had compelled the Lord to drastic action. It was all intended as a solemn warning, but too it was a theodicy. It justified the ways of God to Israel.

Of similar mood are the large number of passages culminating in the threat, "Then you (or they) shall know that I am the Lord." Sometimes this refers to foreign oppressors, sometimes it is the Jews themselves who are to have a terrible demonstration of the wrath of God. But in either case this phrase, too, is clearly apologetic. By blood and terror the Lord would reveal his transcendence toward unfaithful Judah or toward their oppressors, as the case might be. The former passages take account of a Jewish mood which apparently was too greatly immersed, to the disadvantage of religion, in affairs of the common days or perhaps, more ominously, was becoming "assimilated" to pagan environment. But the latter come out of a situation where the claims of Israel's God had to be made good against the implied or expressed sneer that he didn't seem able to do much for his people. It general, so it would appear from their trite phrase, the Jews retorted with the wishful threat that presently the Lord would justify himself with hideous bloody reprisal on his people's foe. Low as this may appear as an expression of religious motivation, we must avoid easy condemnation. The Jews had suffered bitterly. And, as in many other regards, the events of our own times are providing here also lurid exposition of Old Testament thought. We have learned that such mood, while dangerously open to crass hatred and vindictiveness, yet in a deeper way may be an affirmation of the faith that there is a moral order in the world and "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven upon all" brutality of men. Happily there were also, however, Jews who conceived the vindication of God in gracious terms. There are a few, unfortunately only a few, passages,[3] where this much-used phrase is expressive of kindness and blessing for Israel; by such means the nations should "know that I am the Lord."

Such expressions of indignation against the neighbor-nations reveal a prevalent mood of the Judaism of the time. It is notable how the near-by peoples, Ammon and Moab, are denounced for their glee over the fall of the Jewish state; it was a rankling sore probably kept raw by constant irritation in the common intercourse of the years. But the count against Edom and Philistia is simply that of the age-old feud. We have already remarked that this may well come out of the political situation of Ptolemaic times when both these nations had revived as opponents of Judah. Unfortunately, all alike but declare the failure of the restored Jewish state to emulate the vision of the "Servant Songs" of Second Isaiah and the great dreams of the age of universal peace that are among the high achievements of Old Testament thought. Provocation the Jews doubtless had in plenty; and the menace from the east then, as now, might be handled only with superior force. Yet it is regrettable that these religious men who wrote in the Book of Ezekiel did not set forth an ideal toward which practical politics might have striven.

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[3] E.g., 34:27,30; 36:11,23,28 (cf.36); 37:28.

Little need be said about the two chapters, almost, of sustained hatred and vindictiveness appended to the Gog oracle. Behind this shadowy figure an age-long succession of commentators amassed their resentment toward all foreign oppressors. But the condemnations of Tyre and of Egypt differ in the main. True, an appreciable bulk of these comments are nothing but expressions of bigotry and the hope that God, in bitterness as narrow as their own, would wreak a destruction they dared not undertake. More significant, though, are the charges of impious arrogance. It is the same thought as in Nebuchadrezzar's dream of the tree (Daniel, chap. 4). Here we have something of interest. Like the pagan tyrannies of today, these powers had, it would appear, raised themselves about all standards and restraint. They knew no authority but themselves and their selfishness--"from themselves went forth their standards and their law." Well might this shock the pious Jew. It could mean nothing but arrogant blasphemy. It was the contradiction and antithesis of the basic philosophy of all that had been Jewish from the beginning and remains one of Israel's great enduring contributions, the firm conviction that all history is in the hands of God, whose righteousness is ultimate law. And thus in the mingled threats against the powers of their time the commentators were but asserting that faith by which alone, so we have learned once more in our day through bitter travail, men can endure and persevere: the faith that the righteousness of God is the supreme reality in the world. Indeed, this is the thought in all the varied comments we are surveying. We may deplore their modes of expression, we may consider that at times they delight more in the wrath of God than in his goodness, we may feel that their outlook is as limited and narrow as that of certain ostensible religious leaders of our own day, but all alike reason from the conviction that the purposes of God are righteousness and truth and that with him are power and dominion.

They were careful students of their Book of Ezekiel, these commentators; indeed, of their entire sacred scriptures.[4] But, limiting our attention to this single book, one is struck with the richness of reference and allusion in these spurious passages. They used not alone the genuine oracles of the prophet but, as we should expect, made no distinction between original and secondary; indeed, in some chapters the comments are primarily on the spurious matter. They used their Book of Ezekiel and made it a greater one for their successors. That chapters are commonly made up of comments on comments, all resting ultimately on a meager nucleus of original has become a commonplace of our study. But more to be remarked is the citation of other chapters, sometimes far removed in our present book. Thus 6:12 is referred to in 22:5; 7:17 in 21:12; 12:11 in 24:24; and 13:5 in 22:28 ff.—to mention only a few of the many. Their study was not critical (how should we expect it?) but exegetical and homiletic. One goes from them, let us say, to Midrash Rabbah,[5] with no sense of strangeness but noting mainly a developing philosophic interest. And even in Kimhi there is much that is familiar. The exegetical purpose of the ancient commentators is exemplified by a passage such as 33:2-6, but the long development of the theme in chapter 20 is homiletic. This is clearly the object in chapter 18 also, which appropriately closes with a personal appeal. Their interpretations are sometimes accurate; at times they are wide of the mark; but commonly they are just neutral, showing no particular concern for Ezekiel's meaning but only to employ the passage for the needs of their own times.

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[4] So Burrows has shown (The Literary Relations of Ezekiel [1925]).

[5] It is of some relevance to quote here the brief remark of Volz in his discussion of Mowinckel's analysis of the Book of Jeremiah: "Was auf selbstständige Verfasser zurückgeführt wird, scheint mir vielfach bloss spätere homilieartige synagogale Erweiterung zu sein" (Paul Volz, Der Prophet Jeremia [1928], p. xliii).

Much of this commentary may seem trivial, notwithstanding its serious religious themes; and certainly most of it is anything but impressive literature. We miss here the independence of creative writing. It makes no pretense to be such but patently leans on another for topics and in considerable measure for phrasing also. We have come here into the age on the epigoni. Yet happily not all is so to be discounted. Some men of real ability, of vigorous imagination and religious inspiration, have in this anonymous way bequeathed their insights to the ages. Some are poets of considerable power; perhaps best is the author of 19:2-9. Some have left no more than a flash of inspired thought and wording, such as the editorial note that begins the book. But too there are more extended passages of beauty and impressiveness, where the author, swinging clear of forms and models, gives rein to his own personality and genius in thought and words of abiding worth. Among these one must accord high place to the great vision of the valley of dry bones (37:1-14). Although its literary form leaves much to be desired--its reiteration of formulas is tedious--yet its mood, and perhaps too in some measure the unusual symbolism that the author has chosen in which to frame his thought, carries a sustained interest as the account builds up to its climax where the erstwhile dry bones "stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." The meaning is clear and effective, so that the author's application is scarcely necessary. All converges, delicately but cogently, on the religious needs of the Jews in that long black time succeeding 586 B.C. who gave themselves up to despair that "our hope is lost; we are cut off." But it does not stop here; its meanings ramify afar[6] to our own day, making of this one of the favorite, and certainly one of the great, passages of the Book of Ezekiel.

But another demands mention, when we recall that the book as a whole comes under consideration, although the nature of the problem investigated had centered attention on the first thirty-nine chapters. It is the first twelve verses of chapter 47. Its character as symbolism is apparent; it invokes the license of the poet. Otherwise the concept of a river that increases amazingly without tributary or other augment is but nonsense. But what superb nonsense or poetry or whatever else: a river of life flowing out of the temple of God, from under his altar, and bringing health and sustenance to all and joyous abundance to the most arid places!

Worthy also to be mentioned among the creative passages of the book are the numerous pictures of the gathering and restoration of the scattered people of God and their rebuilding in their own land. Some of these are brief, some of considerable extent, but all are permeated with gentle solicitude and comfort. The concept of the Shepherd of Israel (34:7 ff.) can be given no higher praise than that it is not unworthy of its two famous parallels, with which it is in some way related: the Shepherd Psalm and the Good Shepherd of John's Gospel. Of similar wistful charm and idyllic beauty are the remarkable dreams of the new heart by the gift of which the Lord will make his people worthy of the new day of grace when they shall dwell with him in righteousness and peace:

> Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I

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[6] Apparently the reference was to this passage when the rabbis said, "If a man should tell you that the Holy One, blessed be he, will in the future bring us a resurrection of the dead, tell him, 'It has already occurred through Elijah, through Elisha, through Ezekiel'"(Midrash Rabba: Leviticus, trans. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon [1939], p. 347).

> will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.....I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.

Such were "the men of the great synagogue" who "wrote Ezekiel."

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